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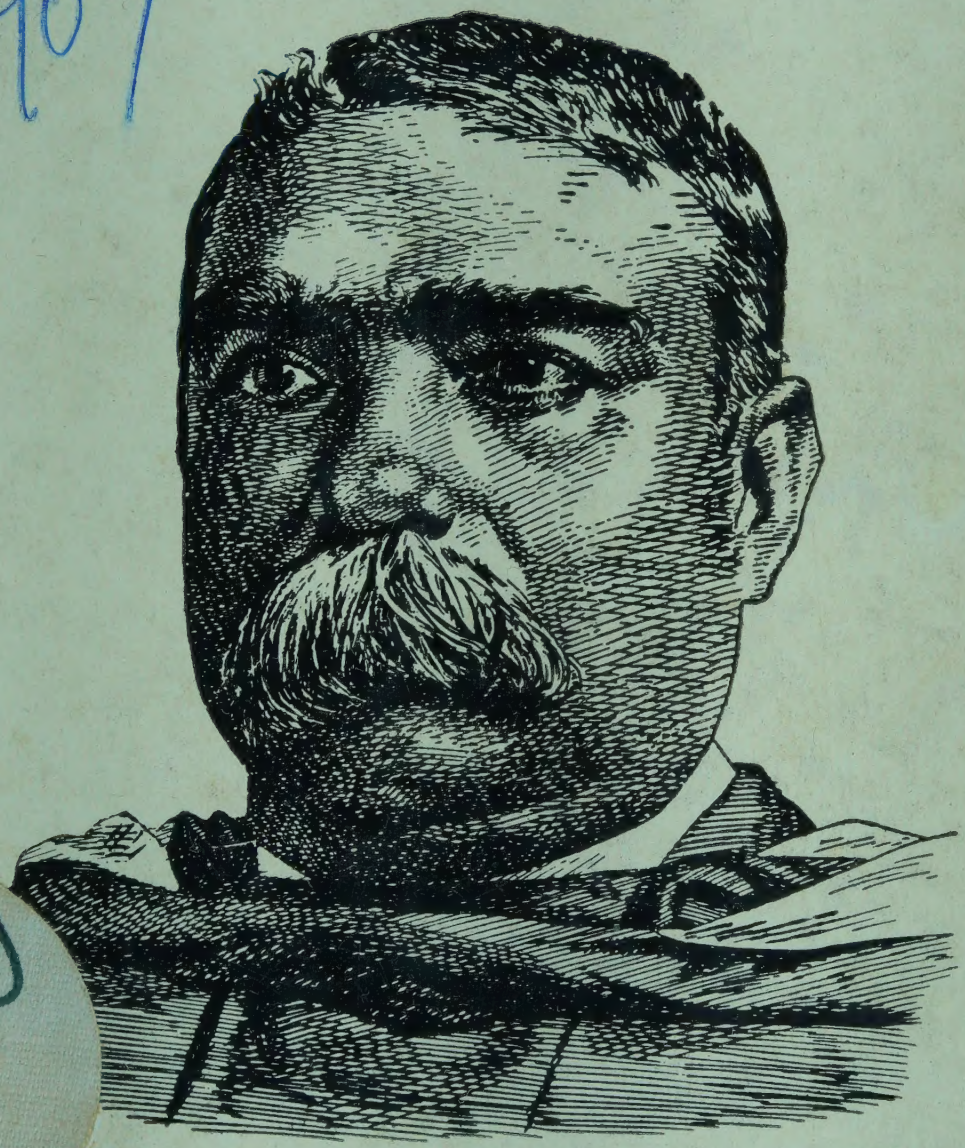

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DR. A. P. DAS GUPTA educated at Presidency College, Calcutta took his M.A. Degree in History in 1924. After a short spell of teaching he joined London University in 1927 and worked for his Ph.D. He returned to India and joined Calcutta University as a Lecturer in History in the Post-graduate Department. From 1936 he worked for several years as Controller of Examinations and Inspector of Colleges. On retirement he worked as Secretary and Curator, Victoria Memorial, Calcutta. He is the author of two books, '*The Central Authority in British India (1774-1784)*' and '*Studies in the History of the British in India*', and several papers. He has contributed two chapters to Vol. VIII of *History and Culture of the Indian People* being published under the editorship of Dr. R. C. Majumdar.

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ASUTOSH MUKHERJEE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MY FIRST THANKS are due to the National Book Trust for having invited me to write this brief biography. It is always an advantage for a biographer to have known his subject more or less intimately, but I cannot make any such claim. Difference in age and difference in stature between me and Sir Asutosh kept me at a respectful distance from him. But I saw him during my boyhood at our residence, as he was a good friend of my father, Prof. J. N. Das Gupta of the Presidency College, Calcutta, who as member of the Senate and the Syndicate of the University of Calcutta for nearly 25 years until he died in 1921, was a close associate of Sir Asutosh in the great work Sir Asutosh was doing for the University. We constantly heard accounts of Sir Asutosh's activities. I saw him along with other members of the Sadler Commission when he visited our class in the Hare School, Calcutta in 1917. I have also heard him addressing University Convocation meetings and saw him preside over public lectures in the Senate Hall in the University when I was a student. His fiery speeches in the Convocation meetings and the Senate of the University inspired us and evoked our admiration for him. When I served the Calcutta University as a teacher and an administrator, I was serving an institution where the tradition of Sir Asutosh was still alive.

It has been long my desire to be able to write a biography of Sir Asutosh and to describe him fully as I knew him and the invitation from the National Book Trust was therefore most welcome. I have tried to give as complete a picture of Sir Asutosh's great personality as

is possible within the space permitted to me. The need for a full scale study on Sir Asutosh however remains.

The first complete biography of Sir Asutosh, though brief, was written by Prof. N. K. Sinha. The book has been very useful to me. Prof. Sinha has done valuable work by bringing out the references to Sir Asutosh in the Home department proceedings of the Government of India. Sri Sasadhar Sinha's account of Sir Asutosh is a good study. Prof. Dinesh Chandra Sen's reminiscences of Sir Asutosh contains much valuable material. An important source of information is Sir Asutosh's speeches and writings. These are now scattered in various places; they should be collected and published without delay. His contributions to the proceedings of the learned bodies in Bengal will not be fully known unless a serious attempt is made to study the old records of those societies. A full biography of Sir Asutosh Mukherjee running into several volumes is a project that is worth while and should be undertaken early. I also acknowledge my indebtedness to the three excellent chapters in the 'Hundred Years of the University of Calcutta'—the first by Dr. Anil Chandra Banerjee, the second by Prof. T. Chakravorty and the third by Prof. P. N. Banerjee.

I am indebted to Sri Rama Prasad Mukherjee, eldest son of Sir Asutosh, for help and encouragement received from him. My thanks for help received are also due to Sri C. R. Banerjee of the National Library, Calcutta, Sir S. N. Sen, Director, Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, Dr. S. C. Banerjee, Secretary, Bengal Sanskrit Association, and to my two young friends, Sri Pankaj Dutta and Janab Md. Iqbal.

A. P. Das Gupta

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I. EARLY LIFE

ASUTOSH belonged to a family that has produced many eminent Sanskrit scholars. Many of his ancestors contributed substantially to Bengali literature. Asutosh's ancestor, Ram Mukherjee, was a brother of Narasingha Ojha, great grandfather of the famous Kirttivas Ojha, who translated the Ramayana into Bengali. Because of political changes, Narasingha Ojha left his paternal house in Sonargaon in East Bengal and settled in Fulia near Santipur in the Nadia district of the present state of West Bengal. Asutosh's grandfather, Bishwanath, was brought up at his maternal uncle's residence at Jeerat in the Hooghly district of West Bengal. He settled in this village, since when this place has become the home of his branch of the family. Asutosh's great grand uncle, Ramchandra Tarkalankar, was a well-known professor of the Sanskrit College, Calcutta. Ramchandra's son, Nabagopal, was also a teacher in the Sanskrit College. Asutosh's grandfather, Biswanath, wrote in Bengali a book on his journey by river from Kalna to Rangpur. This book set an example of a simple Bengali prose style at a time when modern Bengali prose was taking birth. Asutosh's uncle, Durgaprasad, knew by heart many old Bengali manuscripts. Another uncle, Hariprasad, also wrote Bengali prose and poetry. His book 'Bichitra Bangachitra' was published in 1887.[1]

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[1] D.C. Sen—Asutosh Smriti Katha.

Asutosh's father, Gangaprasad, passed the B.A. examination in 1861 from the Presidency College, Calcutta. He then studied law for sometime. He, however, decided to join Medical College. He passed out in 1866. Gangaprasad married Jagattarini Debi in 1862 and, on June 24, 1864, Asutosh was born in a house in Malanga Lane in Bowbazar, Calcutta, while his father was still a student in the Medical College.

Gangaprasad showed great merit as a student in the Medical College and won a medal in midwifery. It would be interesting to recount here an incident in the early life of Gangaprasad which shows from where Asutosh had imbibed his strong spirit of self respect. The Principal of the College, after Gangaprasad, had passed out of the Medical College, recommended to the Military Secretary to the Viceroy that Gangaprasad be given a part time appointment as a doctor in the Viceroy's establishment. The Military Secretary interviewed Gangaprasad and asked him to join the next day, but told him that he should come properly dressed. Gangaprasad was wearing a coat, dhoti and shoes. He was asked to come in wearing a pair of trousers. Gangaprasad went back to the Principal and told him that, although he had been very kindly received by the Military Secretary, but the latter did not want a good doctor, he only wanted a pair of trousers. He had, therefore, decided not to accept the appointment. Though he was under great financial stress, he would, he said, rather start an independent practice in his profession.

Bhowanipur was then the residence of many eminent Bengalees of the time. Gangaprasad decided to set up practice there. He soon acquired a large practice and

built a residential house on Russa Road in 1872. His academic bent of mind led him to write books on medical science. His 'Practice of Medicine' is well-known. He also wrote a book on Anatomy and a book in Bengali for mothers called 'Matri Siksha'. Ganga-prasad's interests were varied and he read books on a variety of subjects other than medicine. He knew many well-known English poems by heart which he recited to his son Asutosh. This is how Asutosh, even as a little school boy, had learnt by heart the whole of Canto I of Milton's 'Paradise Lost', 'Pleasures of Hope', and many other English poems. During his morning walks with Asutosh, he would speak about the lives and work of great men. Finding that his son had great attraction for knowledge, he filled his home with suitable books for the boy. Gangaprasad discovered that his son had the making of a great man in him. He, therefore, did his best to bring him up along the right lines.

Asutosh had his early schooling in the Chakraberia School, Bhowanipur, Calcutta. He had a very serious illness when he was in his tenth year. While impeded his studies for a time. He was sent to Mathura for a change of air. On his return to Calcutta, he joined the South Suburban School in Bhowanipur. This was in 1876 when he was twelve years old. The Headmaster of the School was no less a person than Pandit Shivanath Shastri, writer, social reformer, educationist and preacher. Asutosh was taught at home by Madhusudan Das who later became a popular leader in Orissa.

Asutosh passed the Entrance examination of the Calcutta University in 1879, standing second in the University. He then joined the Presidency College,

Calcutta. Among his fellow students was Narendranath Dutta, the famous Swami Vivekananda. Asutosh was head and shoulders above his fellow students. While still a student of the F.A. class, he could be seen reading Chaucer and many advanced books on Mathematics. His organizing powers were fully displayed when he got together a memorial committee for Dr. Hugh Mac-Cann, Professor of Mathematics in the Presidency College, who had died suddenly. Asutosh raised a subscription, and a marble tablet in his memory was set up in the Library Hall of the Presidency College. The speech which he delivered on the occasion of the unveiling of the tablet was eloquent and in chaste English drew the admiration of the audience. He was prominent in the college debating society where he developed his powers of debate and of logical expression of thought and chastity of diction. He took the First Arts Examination in 1881 under great physical strain as he was suffering from chronic headache. Moreover he could write only his right hand was administered an electric shock. Inspite of this he stood third among the successful candidates.

A rare occasion when Asutosh took part in a political demonstration was in May 1883 when he was still a student of the Presidency College. The occasion was afforded by the well-known contempt of Court case against Surendranath Banerjee, the famous nationalist leader. In his English daily, 'The Bengalee', Surendranath had made strong critical remarks against Mr. Justice Norris of the Calcutta High Court for having caused the household deity of a Hindu family to be produced in the court and thereby having hurt the

religious feelings of the Hindus. He was charged with contempt of court and tried before a full bench of the High Court on May 5, 1883 and sentenced to imprisonment. We let Surendranath describe the scene: "The student community had mustered in strong force, and among them I noticed some who rose to high distinction as servants of the crown. In the demonstration that followed the passing of the sentence, they took a leading part in a fashion, common among young men all over the world, smashing windows and pelting the police with stones. One of these rowdy youths was Asutosh Mukherjee...".[1] Obviously the religious as well as the nationalist sentiments of young Asutosh had been deeply touched.

Asutosh took the 'A' course for the B.A. examination, there being no honours courses at the time. The subjects he took were English, Mathematics, Sanskrit and Philosophy.

In 1884 Asutosh passed his B.A. examination standing first in the University and was the recipient of the Eshan and Vizianagram Scholarships and of the Harish Chandra Prize. In the same year he became a fellow of the London Mathematical Society. He also topped the list of successful students in the M.A. examination in Mathematics in 1885. Asutosh received special mention from the respective Vice-Chancellors in their Convocation addresses of 1884 and 1885. In 1886 he got the Prem Chand Scholarship, the coveted blue ribbon of the University, and in the same year he took the M.A. degree again in Physics. He was thus the

[1] S.N. Banerjee—A Nation in Making, p. 71. 1963 edn.

first student in this University to take the M.A. degree in two subjects. Though he was primarily interested in Mathematics and Physics, his knowledge of History, English Literature and Philosophy was by no means superficial. He applied to the University authorities next year for permission to appear again at the PRS Examination in these three Arts subjects. The permission could not be given.

In 1887 Asutosh was appointed an examiner for the M.A. examination in Mathematics and served as such till 1891. Thus he was the first Indian to be appointed an examiner for the highest examination of the Calcutta University in a major subject. Before this only Europeans were appointed examiners for the M.A. examination, except for M.A. in Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian, because in these subjects Europeans were not available.

Asutosh took up the study of law in 1885. He passed the B.L. examination in 1888. As a student of the Law Department of the City College, Calcutta, he was a pupil of Satyendra Prasanna Sinha, the eminent lawyer who later in life took a seat in the British House of Lords as Baron Sinha of Raipur.

The keen interest taken by Asutosh in legal studies while he was a student is shown by the fact that he attended the Tagore Law Lectures for three successive years and won the gold medal awarded for proficiency in the subject of the lectures.

A record similar to the one outlined above may also have been achieved by many other students, but Asutosh was not merely one of them. He was a genius and the genius in him was revealed when he was still in his teens. At a time when research was unknown in India, this

young student of the Presidency College was publishing startling papers in learned journals in India and abroad. When he was a student of the F.A. class of the Presidency College, he published a paper in which he gave a new proof of the 25th proposition of the first book of Euclid. It was published in 1881 in the 'Messenger of Mathematics' of Cambridge. As a matter of fact, he wrote it when he was a school student preparing for his Entrance examination. It was published in 1883 on the insistence of his teacher in Mathematics, Prof. Booth of the Presidency College. Even before he took his B.A. degree, he had published his second mathematical paper in the 'Messenger of Mathematics'. This was on 'Some Extensions of a Theorem of Salmon'. Before he took his M.A. degree, he had published his third mathematical paper in the 'Quarterly Journal of Pure and Applied Mathematics' (1886). It was 'A note on Elliptic Functions'—a paper of outstanding merit and acclaimed as such by well-known mathematicians. This paper has been referred to in Enneper's 'Elliptische Functionen'. Soon after taking his M.A. degree, Asutosh published a paper 'On the differential equation of a trajectory' in the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. The solution given by the Italian mathematician Mainardi of the different equations of the oblique trajectory of confocal ellipses was a complicated one, and Asutosh showed that Mainardi's solution could be replaced by a pair of simple equations. In 1887 he published a paper 'On Monge's Differential Equation to all Conics' in the journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. These papers led to a great deal of discussion and appreciation by mathematicians in

Europe. Scholars interested in mathematical research may refer with profit to the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal for a dozen more papers published by young Asutosh between 1887 and 1890. Before he was 25 years old, he had established his position in the world of mathematical research. Prof. Ganesh Prasad, the well-known mathematician, wrote, "Sir Asutosh's contributions to mathematical knowledge were due to his own unaided efforts while he was only a college student. After Bhaskara he was the first Indian to enter into the field of mathematical research as distinct from astronomical research and did much which was truly original". In 1893 Asutosh published a text-book on Geometrical Conics meant for beginners of the subject. The book was highly popular with students and ran into many editions. In 1885, the year in which he passed his M.A. examinations, he became a fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society of London, and next year a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and a member of the Asiatic Society of Calcutta.

In 1890 he became a member of the Mathematical Society of Palermo in Sicily.

Of him H.H. Risley, the Home Secretary of the Government of India, remarked in 1906, "In his subject, Pure Mathematics, he has a European reputation and the result of his original researches have been embodied with his name in standard Cambridge textbooks".[1]

For many years the voice of Asutosh Mukherjee was the deciding one in the affairs of the Calcutta University and also in such learned societies and bodies of which

[1] N.K. Sinha—Asutosh Mukherjee, p. 65

he was a member or over which he presided. It is interesting to note that, while he was still a student, there was an occasion when Asutosh's voice had prevailed in the Calcutta University. He had set at nought, by his convincing arguments, a proposal to change the rules for the Prem Chand Roy Chand Studentship. It was proposed that those awarded the scholarship in Science would have to spend three years in England under distinguished teachers of international reputation. Asutosh wrote to the Press and also sent a circular to all fellows of the University protesting against the proposal. He argued convincingly that the proposal would prevent successful students belonging to conservative families, who were not willing to send their sons abroad, from availing themselves of the scholarship. Moreover, the amount of the scholarship was not enough to maintain a student for three years in England. Therefore, poor but meritorious students would not be able to enjoy the scholarship. Scholars, who may be able to go to England and manage to carry on there for three years, would feel frustrated on their return, as they would not find sufficiently, well equipped laboratories in this country to carry on their research. And also because all the higher jobs in the educational line were reserved for Europeans. The Fellows of the University found the arguments so convicing that the proposal to attach new conditions to the award was dropped.

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II. AT THE BAR AND ON THE BENCH

THE AFFAIRS OF men are invariably determined by Destiny. Asutosh's first choice obviously was teaching and research. The possibility of joining the educational line came in 1887. Sir Alfred Croft, Director of Public Instruction, offered Asutosh an appointment in the Presidency College, Calcutta. Asutosh wanted that he should not be transferred from Calcutta as that would put an end to his research. Besides, he wanted the same pay and status as that of the European members of the educational service. Croft said that his second demand was an impossible one. Asutosh plainly told Croft that he was not an applicant and that he would accept the post offered to him only on honourable conditions. The fierce spirit of self-respect in him had been hurt and he told Croft that he would much rather join the bar. In 1887, at the invitation of Dr. Mahendra Lal Sarkar who had founded the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, Asutosh started to deliver lectures at the Association. These lectures were attended to, with profit, by students preparing for the M.A. examination, which also included those of the Presidency College. He continued to deliver lectures at the Association right up to 1891 when his legal practice precluded him from carry on. The efforts of Mahendra Lal Sarkar to obtain funds for the creation of an endowed professorship for Asutosh Mukherjee did not meet with success. Had it been otherwise, the legal profession and the judiciary would have been deprived of the benefit of his

talents, but, surely, a new school of mathematical physics would have been founded. Asutosh served his articles under that eminent lawyer, Rashbehari Ghosh. He was enrolled as an advocate of the Calcutta High Court in August 1888. The last chance of his adopting the life of a teacher and research worker came when Sir Gooroodas Banerjee was the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University (1890-92), because Sir Gooroodas tried his utmost to create the post of a Professor of Mathematics for him. But he failed. After that Asutosh took seriously to the legal profession.

Asutosh had married Jogamaya Devi, daughter of Pandit Ramnarayan Bhattacharjee of Krishnanagar, in 1886. In 1887 his younger brother Hemantkumar died. In 1889 Asutosh's father died. He now had to think more about his profession than research in mathematics.

Asutosh's rise in the profession was meteoric. By 1892 he was fairly well established in the legal profession and we find him unable even to continue his lectures at the Indian Association. He brought to his legal practice his remarkable capacity for hard work, his prodigious memory and great learning, and his analytical mind, which always enabled him to seize the essential points of a case. It took him little time to be well established in the profession. Asutosh became one more example of an eminent mathematician becoming an eminent lawyer. Both Mathematics and Law require the same qualities—intellectual clarity and logical faculty—which Asutosh possessed in abundance. The training for the profession he had received from Rashbehari Ghosh also proved to be a great advantage.

But he could not induce himself to be converted into a money earning machine. His scholastic temperament led him to die in that great ocean of knowledge which is law. He became a Doctor of Laws in 1894. Asutosh's position as a jurist was recognized by the University of Calcutta when he was appointed the Tagore Law Professor for 1898. The subject on which he lectured was the 'Law of Perpetuities in British India'. He discussed the subject in the course of twelve lectures with thoroughness characteristic of him. These lectures remain as evidence of his capacity for research in the domain of law.

In 1904, when Asutosh was scarcely forty years old, he was appointed a judge of the Calcutta High Court. He joined on June 6, 1904 and with a few months he began to shine in his full lustre.

With a short break of eight months in 1908, when he was on deputation for University work, he sat on the bench for 19 years and retired a few months before his death. He had acted as Chief Justice for a short time in 1920. The number of his decision that were reported in the law journals exceed two thousand five hundred. This is double the number of those reported of that great judge, Sir Barnes Peacock. They relate to almost every topic of law. Endowed with an unlimited capacity for hard work, he delved deeply into every matter, analysed the law on the subject, used all the decisions of the courts in India and abroad on relevant matters arising in the case, hit on the essential, and produced judgments which were the last word on the issues arising in the case.

"His decisions on questions of Hindu Law evince a spirit of minute research into the original sources, a

trait so rare in recent decisions. In deciding such cases he had always in view the fact that the decisions must be in accordance with the lines which a Hindu Court of Justice would have followed". In his judgment on *Khub Lall* vs. *Ajodhya* (22 C.L.J. 345) he turned to such original sources as Raghunandan's Jalashaorgatattwa and the Chaturbarga Chintamani of Hemadri and "took a broad view of legal necessity such as a Hindu Court of Justice would have taken". His judgment in *Debi Bhagat* vs. *Golab Bhagat* (I.L.R. 40 Cal. 721), in which he differed from the views of so eminent a Hindu jurist as Sir Gooroodas Banerjee, was a classic one. When the same point was raised in a case before the Privy Council, Lord Dunedin in deciding the matter noticed Justice Mukherjee's decision in the above case and acknowledged the assistance he had received from this lucid and able judgment. (C.L.J. Vol. XXXIX L.R. 62n. et. 63n.)

The law of mortgage has been greatly enriched by his judgments. The case of *Hakimlal* vs. *Ramlal* (6 C.L.J. 46) "is remarkable for the lucid exposition of the doctrine of substituted security as based on principles consistent with equity, justice and good conscience". The case of *Surjiram Marwari* vs. *Barhmadeo* (2 C.L.J. 288) and *Gurudas Singh* vs. *Chandrika Singh* (5 C.L.J. 611) are remarkable for the excellent analysis of the doctrine of subrogation. "Equipped in ancient and modern law he found no difficulty in demonstrating the fundamental principles and distinction underlying the doctrine which earned for him the name of 'Savigry of Subrogatin'.[1]

[1] C.L.J. Vol. XXXIX, p. 63n.

Asutosh tried to make each of his judgment a repository of all the cases that may possibly have a bearing on the question at issue. With this end in view he cultivated a knowledge of almost every modern system of law. He particularly concentrated his attention on the decisions of the American judges, for he maintained that the social and industrial development in the States, which had its repercussions on law and and administration of justice, was far in advance of any country in Europe. "He maintained that it was only prejudice and a spirit of conservatism, a blindness to the developing social needs and relations, which could shut out the use of this fruitful source of general principles".

He never allowed any attempt to restrict the jurisdiction or powers of the High Court. "The restrictions placed upon the revisional powers of the High Court did not deter him from interfering, whenever justice required it, for he was the judge who made a free use of the powers under the charter. Thus in *Ismail* vs. *Samser Rahman* (I.L.R. 41 Cal. 436), when pressed with the argument that the High Court had no power to interfere with an order passed in appeal discharging a temporary injuction, he observed thus: "We do not feel pressed by the objection suggested, because obviously it is competent to this Court to interfere under Sec. 15 of the Charter Act : and in view of the conduct of the defendants, which in substance amounts to a defiance of the authority of the Court, we are of opinion that this is a case in which ample ground has been made out to justify our interference".[1]

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[1] C.L.J. Vol. XXXIX, p. 63n.

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Whether administering civil law or criminal law, he was equally a great judge. He sat on the bench from the age of 40 up to the age of 59, but throughout this long tenure of the office of a judge he never deviated in his judgments from the high standard which he had set for himself when in the prime of his life.

He had told his colleague Mr. Justice Rampini, when he was a young judge, that he would not desire to continue on the bench when his capacity for work had diminished. What he had said when he was young, he adhered to at the age of 59. Six months before his actual date of retirement, he decided to retire as he felt that his state of health was such that he would not be fit to discharge his responsibilities to his satisfaction. The death in 1925 of his daughter, who was so dear to him, was a great blow to him. Moreover, the hearing of the case of *Rex* vs. *Barindra Kumar Ghosh* (38 C.L.J. 411) and the writing of that great judgment impaired his health. He therefore felt that he should retire, and he did with effect from January 1, 1924.

In bidding him farewell, the Advocate-General said, "Apart from the brilliance of your career on the Bench, you have earned the esteem and affection of the Bar by your uniform courtesy, quick appreciation and constant encouragement of diffident merit. No junior felt embarrassed in your court where good law was well administered. In the maze and labyrinth of adjudged cases, you ever walked with a firm step, holding aloft the torch of justice". Sir Lancelot Sanderson, the Chief Justice, added, "He has been activated by

one desire only, namely to maintain the great traditions of the court and to promote the administration of justice in all its branches. His great knowledge, his wonderful memory and his untiring energy have been devoted to this purpose for nearly twenty years. He has been an outstanding personality not only in the Court but also in Bengal, and I think I may say with propriety that his name has been known and his influence felt throughout the whole of India". In reply Sir Asutosh said, "I have never favoured attempts to restrict the jurisdiction of the Court and I have tried uniformly to keep wide open the gates of the temple of justice, so that every litigant who considered rightly or wrongly that he had a grievance might not have his cause summarily rejected and might have the amplest opportunity to place his case fully on the merits before the highest tribunal—the ultimate court of appeal in the land. My ambition has been to attain the ideal of judicial administration, to hear patiently, to consider diligently, to understand rightly, to decide justly".

III. ASUTOSH AND THE CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY (1889—1906)

In 1876 the University of Calcutta held a special Convocation to confer an honorary degree on Edward, Prince of Wales, later King Edward VII Asutosh, then a boy of twelve, was taken by his father to the Convocation to have a glimpse of the heir to the British throne. The glamour of the solemn ceremony where the most distinguished people of the country were present, made a great impression on his mind. It is probable that this scene fired on ambition in him to be a member of this august body. He said, "It had always been my ambition to be allowed to do something—something as I flattered myself in my youthful dreams for the good and glory of my Alma Mater". In his student day's he was seen during his leisure hours to go attentively through the proceedings of the different bodies of the University, which were available to him as his uncle Radhikaprasad was a member of the Senate. In 1884 a large number of calendars and minutes of the University were being sold at an auction. Nobody seemed to care for them. Comes Asutosh on the scene. He purchased all of them, took them to his house and studied them thoroughly. Sir Courtenay Ilbert, Vice-Chancellor, had watched with admiration the academic career of Asutosh and had spoken highly of him in his Convocation speech in 1885. On the completion of his academic career, Asutosh was asked by Ilbert what he could do for him. Asutosh could have asked for a

good job under the Government. But instead he asked for a honorary position. He said he wanted to be a member of the Senate. Ilbert spoke about him to Lord Lansdowne, the Chancellor, and Asutosh was nominated by Government as a Fellow of the Calcutta University with effect from January 16, 1889.

In the official letter recommending his appointment, it was stated : "He is the most distinguished mathematician that the Calcutta University has yet produced and has done a great deal of original work which has gained him the membership of one or two learned societies in Great Britain. He is or was a member of the Asiatic Society and his papers read before that body have attracted much attention".[1] Within a few months of his nomination to the Senate, he was elected to the Syndicate. Asutosh was now in his chosen field of work. From the very outset he plunged himself deeply into University work. He attended every meeting of the Senate and Syndicate and of the other bodies of which he was a member. His great knowledge of the past proceedings of the University bodies, acquired as a result of the study of the old minutes of the University, was of great help to the deliberations and placed him in a superior position compared to other members.

In his Convocation address of 1891, Gooroodas Banerjee as Vice-Chancellor raised the question of including vernacular languages in the courses of studies and making them compulsory subjects for University examinations. It is necessary to describe here the position of the Indian languages in the curricula for

[1] N.K. Sinha—Asutosh Mukherjee, p. 58.

the different courses at that time. In the first regulations of the Calcutta University, Indian languages were optional. They could be taken for the Entrance and B.A. examinations in lieu of classical languages. It was the same for the F.A. examination when instituted. The vernaculars, however, disappeared as subjects of examinations in the F.A. and B.A. examinations when the regulations were amended in 1864, but they retained their place in the schedule of second languages for the Entrance. In 1878 modern Indian languages re-entered F.A. and B.A. curricula through the back door. Only women candidates were permitted to substitute an Indian vernacular for the second language. Gooroodas Banerjee said, "I also deem it, not merely desirable, but necessary that we should encourage the study of those Indian vernaculars that have a literature by making them compulsory subjects of our examination in conjunction with their kindred classical languages. The Bengali language has now a rich literature that is well worthy of study, and Urdu and Hindi are also progressing fairly in the same direction....I firmly believe we can not have a nation, unless knowledge is disseminated through our own vernaculars". In pursuit of this object Asutosh, on March 14, 1891 moved the Syndicate :

I. "That in the Arts examination, candidates who take up Sanskrit should also be examined in either Bengali, Hindi or Oriya and those who take up Persian or Arabic should be examined also in Urdu.

II. That the foregoing proposition be carried out in the manner following, that is to say :—

(A) In the F.A. examination :—

* * *

(i) In addition to the textbooks prescribed in the above named classical languages, textbooks be also prescribed in the above mentioned corresponding vernacular languages.

(ii) The first paper be devoted to the classical language and the second paper to questions in the vernacular textbooks prescribed, and to an original composition in the vernacular.

(B) In the B.A. examinations :—

* * *

(i) In addition to the textbooks prescribed in the above named classical languages, textbooks be also prescribed in the above mentioned corresponding vernacular languages.

(ii) For the Pass paper the same scheme be adopted as for the F.A. examination.

(iii) For the Honours papers, in lieu of the third paper on prose and poetry, a paper be set containing questions on the vernacular textbooks and on original compositions in the vernaculars.

(C) In the M.A. examination to the English essay required by para 5 of the M.A. regulations, candidates be required to write an essay in one of the above named vernaculars on any subject connected with the history or literature of the classical or vernacular language professed by them".

The proposals were referred to the Faculty of Arts which discussed them on July 11, 1891. Messrs Umesh Chandra Dutt, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Chandranath Basu, Mahendranath Ray, K.S. Macdonald, Ananda Mohan Basu and Haraprasad Sastri spoke in favour of the motion. Raja Piyarimohan

Mukherjee, Moulvi Serajul Islam, Col. Jarett, Nawab Abdul Latif, Mr. Rajaninath Ray, Mr. Nilmani Mukherjee and Pandit Mahes Chandra Nyaratna made speeches against the proposal. The motion was put to the vote and was lost by a majority of seventeen votes to eleven.

Asutosh, not disheartened by the defeat, again moved at a meeting of the Syndicate on July 20, 1891 : "that the Syndicate recommend to the Senate that a Committee may be appointed to consider whether it is possible to devise some scheme by means of which greater encouragement may be given by the University to the study of the Indian vernaculars than has been hitherto done". The Syndicate resolved that it "can not accede to the request".

How by the efforts of Asutosh the Indian vernaculars, ultimately, obtained their rightful place in the University curricula will appear gradually in the course of this narrative. At the time, however, the mosti mportant question before the University was that of its reorganization. The Act of 1857 by which the University of Calcutta had been incorporated had a very limited conception of the University. The preamble laid down that "it has been determined to establish an University at Calcutta for the purpose of ascertaining, by means of examination, the persons who have acquired proficiency in different branches of Literature, Science and Art and of rewarding them by academical degrees..." Thus the University was to be merely an examining body. The University had no teaching functions. The schools and colleges were not part of the University. The University laid down the syllabus for the examinations and named the textbooks. Beyond telling the schools and

colleges what syllabi they had to follow and which books were to be textbooks for examinations, the University had nothing to do with the educational institutions. The members of the Senate had been named in the Act and appointed for life. Educated opinion in the country could not be expected to remain satisfied with a University of this type and the question of amending the Act of 1857 came under active consideration of the University as early as 1890. In April 1890 a Committee was appointed by the Senate to consider the matter. The Committee recommended that the preamble should be suitably amended, so that the University might take up other functions connected with the advancement of learning. The Committee also recommended that of the total number of Fellows, which should be fixed by the Chancellor, 50% should be nominated by the Chancellor and of the remainder, two-thirds should be elected by the Senate and one-third by the graduates. The recommendations of the Committee were accepted by the Senate, but the Government of India rejected the proposal on the ground that such amendments were not of a pressing nature. In 1893 the Senate considered the matter again and adopted a resolution, "respectfully requesting the Government of India to take into their early consideration the proposal submitted to them for amending the Act". No further action appears to have been taken in the matter until Lord Curzon came upon the scene. Lord Curzon was a graduate of the Oxford University and it was easy for him to realize the shortcomings of the Calcutta University, which was a merely examining University, as compared with the teaching and residential Universities

of Oxford and Cambridge. He pointed out in his first Convocation address in 1899 as Chancellor that the Calcutta University was doing useful work inspite of its deficiencies, and though the present system was faulty and there was ground for reform, should be cautious and "not wholesale reconstruction should probably be the motto of our action". He promised that "the whole system of education in this country...will, during my term of office, have my earnest attention". Lord Curzon uttered very encouraging words in his Convocation address in February 1901. "My one ambition," he said, "is to make this University worthy of its position as the premier University in India—to set before it a high ideal and to render it capable of following in the foot-steps if its European prototypes".

In September 1901 Lord Curzon convened a conference of educational experts at Simla. The conference recommended that the defects of the existing system called for "the application of wisely considered remedies". They were of the opinion that "the University Senates as at present constituted, are not well fitted to devise or to carry out the measures which are urgently required for the interests of our students". This was followed by the appointment of the Indian Universities Commission in January 1902. Thomes Raleigh, Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University, was president and the members were Syed Hossain Bilgrami, J.P. Hewett, Home Secretary to the Government of India, Alexander Pedler, Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, A.G. Bourne, Principal, Presidency College, Madras, D. Mackicham, Principal, Wilson College, Bombay, and Gooroodas Banerjee. A local member was attached to the

commission at each University centre for the purpose of the enquiry regarding that particular University. Asutosh Mukherjee was the local member for Calcutta. The commission made important reeommendations among which were those regarding the reconstitution of the Senate, the powers of the Syndicate and the affiliation of colleges. The most important recommendation was that the University should cease to be a purely examining body. The recommendations of the Indian Universities Commission of 1902 were embodied in a bill brought in before the Indian Legislative Council in November 1903.

Asutosh had been elected to the Bengal Legislative Council by the University of Calcutta in 1899. He was re-elected to the Council in 1901. Now that the University Bill was before the Imperial Legislative Council, Asutosh was tempted to seek election to that body. In 1904 he defeated Surendranath Banerjee, the great Indian leader, and the Maharaja of Darbhanga, a powerful zaminder, and took his seat in the Imperial Legislative Council. Soon after the election, Lord Curzon put him in the Select Committee on the bill. In connection with the choice of Asutosh, Curzon remarked : "The honourable member was only the other day elected to the Council. No sooner did this news reach us here than we at once placed him upon the Select Committee of the bill, though we knew it must add considerably to the length and contentiousness of the proceedings, but so anxious were we to give full scope to reasonable and competent criticism that we at once took advantage of his service... we do not want time servers or sycophants".[1]

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[1] *Ibid*, p. 60.

In a speech in the Imperial Legislative Council on March 21, 1904, Asutosh set out his ideal of a University. He said, "to my mind, a University is a corporation of teachers and students banded together for the pursuit of learning and the increase of knowledge, duly housed and fitly endowed, to meet the demands raised in the achievement of its purposes. In the prosecution of its academic aims, the University should be free from all external censorship of doctrine, it should also be free from all external control over the range or the modes or the subjects of teaching. Above all thought should be free from fetters of official type : whether political from the state, or ecclesiastical from the Church, or civil from the community, or pedantic from the corporate repressive action of the University itself. In its establishment, the amplest powers that wisdom can suggest should be conferred upon it. In working out its intellectual salvation, the exercise of those powers should be vested in select bodies of fit persons, sufficiently small in member to be efficient, yet large enough in number to prevent degeneration into an intellectual clique, changing sufficiently from time to time to prevent the dominance of personal policies, and representative enough to be in touch alike with the experience of the past and with aspirations for the future, so far as these have taken shape or acquired definition".

The new bill did not show any promise of the fulfilment of this aim and Indian opinion was loud in denunciation of the bill. Gokhale as member of the Indian Legislative Council was strong in his criticism of the bill and declared that the Government of India was making "a present of a permanent monopoly of power to Euro-

pean educationists". Gokhale pointed out that there was no provision in the bill for election of members of the Senate by professors and yet this is the class of men that has more immediate interest than any other in the deliberations of the University". "Again the proportion of seats thrown open to election is too small, while that reserved for Government nomination is too large". Asutosh joined Gokhale in his criticism of the bill. He pointed out that while the major share of collegiate teaching was in the hands of Indian teachers, there was no justification for increasing the European element in the University bodies. Asutosh moved an amendment to the bill to include a few representative of colleges and University teachers in the Senate. But official opposition killed it.[1] Asutosh said, "I am not one of those who contend that high education must be left entirely to the control of the people. On the other hand, I willingly concede that high education is one of the paramount duties of the state, and that it must be nurtured and developed under the fostering care of a beneficient Government. But I deny most emphatically that it is necessary or desirable to have any provisions in the law which may possibly convert the University into mere departments of the State; it is quite possible to stunt the growth of beautiful tree by constant pruning and too affectionate care".[2] The bill required that the regulations framed by the Senate should be submitted to Government for their sanction; if any additions or alterations appeared to Government to be necessary,

[1] Hundred Years of the University of Calcutta, p. 172.

[2] *Ibid*, pp. 171-72.

these would be incorporated in the regulations after consulting the Senate. Both Gokhale and Asutosh were opposed to the provision. Asutosh said, "I entirely dissent from the view that the Government should take power to add to or alter the regulations...it seems to me quite inconsistent with the avowed character of the University at a body of experts, that an elaborate set of regulations framed by them should be liable to be modified by the Government, and I am unable to see where Government will get expert advice outside the Senate to help it in the performance of this delicate and difficult task".[1] Gokhale did not agree that the provisions of the bill will effect an improvement in the character and working of the affiliated institutions. Asutosh however thought that affiliated colleges would be able to do better under the new system. "I welcome," he said, "the provisions of the bill defining the requirements of an affiliated college, and I have no doubt that if these provisions are reasonably, judiciously and sympathetically enforced, they will tend to elevate the standard and character of our colleges".[2] Inspite of his objection to several clauses of the bill, Asutosh contributed, as a member of the Select Committee of the bill, an important part of the legislation by framing the transitory provisions of the new Act, viz. Sec. 12, which related to the "election and nomination of ordinary fellows within one year after commencement of the Act, and temporary continuance of existing University administration". When Raleigh moved the Imperial Legislative Council for

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[1] *Ibid*, p. 175.

[2] *Ibid*, p. 173.

adoption of the transitory provisions, he said, "We owe these transitory provisions in the main to the ingenuity of a learned judge of the High Court of Calcutta,... a member of the Select Committee that was responsible for turning the bill into its present shape and one of the most consistent allies of Mr. Gokhale".[1]

Sec. 3 of the Indian Universities Act of 1904 contained the following provision. "The University shall be and shall be deemed to have been incorporated for the purpose (among others) of making provision for the instruction of students, with power to appoint University Professors and Lecturers, to hold and manage educational endowments, to erect, equip and maintain University libraries, laboratories and museums, to make regulations relating to the residence and conduct of students, and to do all acts, consistent with the Act of Incorporation and this Act which tend to the promotion of study and research". Asutosh was to seize upon this section to build up his University into a great teaching and research University. Even at the bill stage Asutosh realized that finance would be the big stumbling block against his aim and he appealed to the Government for generous and liberal help to the University.

Alexander Pedler was appointed Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University to carry out the new policy. The new Act enjoined the Senate to prepare a revised body of Regulations within one year after the commencement of the Act. The Senate was unable to complete the work within one year. The Government then allowed the Senate another period of six months for the

[1] N.K. Sinha—Asutosh Mukherjee, p. 60.

purpose. When even after this period the Senate was unable to complete the work, it fell upon the Government, under the provisions of the Act, to frame the regulations. The Government of India appointed a small committee consisting of the members of the Senate representing the various interests to complete the work of framing the regulations. Asutosh Mukherjee was appointed President of this committee which included five other members. The Committee finished their labours in two months during which they held fifty meetings. Needless to say that Asutosh was the author and chief architect of these regulations which were divided into fifty four chapters and dealt in ample detail with all matters relating to the University of Calcutta. The strain involved on Asutosh, who was doing all this work on the top of his duties as Judge of the High Court, can well be imagined.

When Pedler retired in March 1906, Asutosh was invited to become the Vice-Chancellor. In recommending his appointment to the Viceroy, H.H. Risley, Home Secretary to the Government of India, wrote : "I have no hesitation in saying that the Hon'ble Mr. Justice Mookerjee is marked out by his scientific attainments, his long connection with the University and the work he has done for it and by his official position as conspicuously qualified for the post of Vice-Chancellor. Dr. Mukherjee was appointed a fellow of the University in January 1889 and has been a member of the Syndicate for more than 16 years. During that time he has attended every meeting of the Syndicate except one and all meetings of the Senate and of the Faculties of Art and Law. For the last eleven years he has been President of

the Board of Studies in Mathematics and he has conducted the highest examinations in Mathematics and Law since 1887. He represented the University on the Bengal Council from 1899 to 1903 and was additional member of the Viceroy's council as representing Bengal from 1903 to 1904. He served in the Indian Universities Commission in 1902 as the local member for Bengal and when the University was reconstituted in 1904 he was appointed by Government to be an ordinary fellow and appointed to the three faculties of Arts, Science and Law. During the last year the Senate has been occupied with the important task of preparing Regulations under Sec. 25 of the Act and for this purpose has been divided into a number of Committees on all of which except one Dr. Mukherjee is serving. Owing to this and to his remarkable knowledge of the enormous mass of minutes framed by the University since its establishment, he is better acquainted with the internal working of the University than any one, not excepting the present Vice-Chancellor who has been generally dependant on Dr. Mukherjee's advice in conducting the discussions in the various committees...it is essential while the complicated process of framing the regulations is going forward that the Vice-Chancellor should be some one who has a thorough knowledge of the past history of the University and of the intricate discussions which have taken place regarding the regulations during the last year. No one else possesses this knowledge and I can think of no one else who is competent to carry out the difficult task of framing a compact and consistent body of University regulations. I believe that Dr. Mukherjee can be trusted to carry out the policy of Government in

University matters. In a confidential statement made by him before the Universities commission he strongly condemned the systematic lowering of standards.... And when I was on the Syndicate with Dr. Mukherjee ten years ago he was always on the side of sound education".[1] Asutosh held this high office for four consecutive terms extending over a period of eight years from 1906 to 1914. A new era now commenced in the history of higher education in Bengal.

GANDHI PEACE FOUNDATION
BANGALORE CENTRE,
GANDHI BHAVAN
Kumara Park (East), BANGALORE-1.

[1] N.K. Sinha—Asutosh Mukherjee, p. 64-66.

IV. IN THE LEGISLATURE AND THE CALCUTTA CORPORATION (1899—1904)

In 1899 Asutosh was elected by the University of Calcutta to the Bengal Legislative Council. A bill to amend the constitution of the Corporation of Calcutta, well-known as the Mackenzie Bill, was then before the Legislature. The object of the bill was to reduce the elected element in the Corporation, and to increase the control of the Government over the Corporation. According to the constitution which was in force since 1888, the number of Commissioners was 75, of whom 50 were elected, 15 were appointed by the Government and 10 nominated by the Bengal Chamber of Commerce, the Port Trust and the Trades Association. The Mackenzie Bill reduced the number of Commissioners to 50 of whom 25 were to be elected by the general body of rate payers, 10 nominated by bodies representing trade interests and 15 nominated by the Government. The Chairman, in whom the entire executive power was vested, was to be nominated by Government. In between the Chairman and the Corporation there was to be a General Committee consisting of the Chairman and twelve commissioners, four of whom were to be by the Ward Commissioners, four by the appointed Commissioners and four appointed by the Government.

The introduction of the bill led to strong demonstrations of protest by the rate payers, led by prominent citizens of Calcutta. Asutosh took up the popular cause and along with Surendranath Banerjee led the

opposition to the bill in the legislature and fought against it clause by clause. The bill extended over 650 Sections. Beginning from September 9, the battle lasted till the September 27, 1899. Asutosh moved several amendments, most of which were lost. Asutosh proposed that one member from the Calcutta University should be represented on the Corporation. He said, "according to to the provisions of the bill describing the primary functions of the Corporation, we find that the promotion of primary and technical education and the provision of free libraries are objects to which they are to devote their attention. Since this is so, there is nothing unreasonable in the proposition that there shall be at least one educational member on the Corporation. Property qualifiation should not be the only qualification for taking a part in municipal government". He added that if the Senate is empowered to send a representative, a doctor or an engineer should be nominated. The advice of such a person would be invaluable. This amendment was lost. Another amendment which Asutosh moved proposed that any employee of the Corporation drawing a salary of more then Rs. 100.00 per month, who is dismissed, may appeal to the General Committee against the order of dismissal. This was agreed to.

The bill was the result of secret reports which the Government had received accusing the Corporation of malpractices and maladministration. Speaking at the close of the debate, Asutosh said, "I will not stop even for a moment to enquire whether it was wise, whether it was statesmanlike, for any Government to introduce into the Council chamber a measure of such magnitude intended to mutilate, if not to destroy, the form of

municipal government which has prevailed in the capital of the Indian Empire for well high a quarter of a century, till the facts had been ascertained by an independent Commission of Enquiry in whose decision the public might repose implicit confidence...it is perfectly legitimate at this stage to consider whether the bill as amended...does or does not make adequate provision for the removal of the evils to remedy which the bill was avowedly introduced...One of the avowed objects of the bill was to destroy the dominance of the educated Hindu in the Calcutta Corporation. That object has been adequately secured by the provisions of this bill...But, Sir,...what have you substituted for the dominance of the educated Hindu ? You have not satisfied yourself with replacing it by the dominance of the mercantile European or the progressive Mohomedan, but you have replaced it by the irresponsible executive.

"...You have embodied in the bill provisions, not a few, which are inconsistent with the first principles of jurisprudence...you have maintained an arbitrary system of assessment which is inconsistent with the first notions of political economy, which is inconsistent with the law as administered in England....You have incorporated into the Bill variations upon the provisions of the Land Acquisition Act which are absolutely indefensible in principle...To crown all, the provisions of the bill are so numerous, many of them are so novel and so complicated ...that they will puzzle the best administrators, lead to the inevitable oppression of the poor, and foster mischievous litigation".[1]

[1] Proceedings of the Bengal Legislative Council, September 27, 1899.

The legislative councils in those days were no more than deliberating bodies. With the official members being in the majority, the non-official members could not influence the course of legislation. In the course of the discussion on the Mackenzie Bill, the member in charge of the bill had "seriously defined the functions of the council to be to carry out the mandate of the Government of the day when the principle of any proposed legislation has been approved by that Government". Asutosh made a spirited reply to such an assertion. He said, "I would not be surprized, Sir, if this had been authoritatively laid down to be the duty of the official members of the Council...But I repudiate... this extraordinary theory when it is applied to non-official members...I retain, Sir, the right to think and judge for myself. I have made none the custodian of my conscience, and so long as I have the honour of a seat in this Council, it will be my duty to advise the Council to the best of my ability and judgment regardless of what this or that party may approve or disapprove".[1]

After the Mackenzie Bill became law, Government nominated Asutosh as a Commissioner of the Calcutta Corporation. He was elected a member of the General Committee of the Corporation. In 1903 he represented the Calcutta Corporation in the Bengal Legislative Council. In the Corporation he was as active as elsewhere and worked in the interests of the rate payers. Repair of roads and improvement of drainage received his best attention.

In January 1900 a bill to amend the Bengal Municipal

[1] *Ibid*, September 27, 1899.

Act in its application to Darjeeling was introduced in the Bengal Council. Asutosh was appointed a member of the Select Committee.

Asutosh strongly criticized the provisions made for Education in the Bengal Financial Statement for 1900-1901. He noted with concern the steady decrease in the amount spent from year to year on the maintenance of Government Art Colleges. While this was so the income derivable from fees in those colleges had during these very years steadily increased. "This circumstance," he said, "has been the source of the deepest regret to me as also to every educated Indian". He contended that in at least one Government College, education should be imparted at the highest possible standard by the best available men, so that the non-Government institutions might be supplied with a thoroughly efficient staff. The Government should not weaken its colleges in the name of providing larger funds for primary education. "I yield to none," he said, "in my appreciation of the duty of the Government to educate the masses, but I can not overlook that it is equally the duty of the Government to offer all possible facilities for the high education of such portions of the community as may be qualified to receive its advantage". He went on to say, "I can not admit that the time has come when the Government can safely weaken the cause of high education, and I have, therefore, noticed with the deepest concern the policy of retrenchment, retrenchment necessarily implies the employment of inferior agency or of competent persons upon inadequate salary, in either event the result may be unsatisfactory. In education we must avail ourselves of the services of the very best men...But if you

make your other departments more attractive than the Education Department, if you hold out better prospects in the Judicial and Executive branches of your service, you can not have the best talent in the Education Department".[1]

Even minor legislation did not escape his careful scrutiny. A bill to amend Bengal Act 1 of 1869 (Cruelty to Animals) was brought before the Council on March 31, 1900. Asutosh moved four amendments, one of which was lost, one carried and the remaining two were withdrawn by him. His amendment to give a better definition of the word 'animal' was lost, but his amendment to limit the time for prosecution after committing offence was carried.

When the Bengal Financial Statement of 1902-1903 came up, Asutosh pointed out the necessity of improving the status of the members of the provincial and subordinates branches of the educational service. The initial pay which the members of the executive and judicial services received was higher, promotion in those services was also more rapid. Under the circumstances the most distinguished graduates prefered to join those branches of Government service. The pay and prospects of the members of the provincial educational service, he said, should not be lower than that of the subordinate judicial and executive services. Asutosh gave examples of the ridiculously low wages drawn by qualified people in the educational service. The Principal of the Sanskrit College, a scholar of reputation who had put in twenty-five years of service, was still in the grade of Rs. 300.00.

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[1] *Ibid*, April 7, 1900.

His pupils who had joined the executive service were being paid twice as much. A teacher in a Government school got Rs. 20 per month. The consequence was that education of our boys had gone from bad to worse. Asutosh criticized the distinction between Superior and Provincial Services under the Education Department as arbitrary and not based on any rational principle. Two equally distinguished graduates were placed, one in the Superior and other in tne Provincial Service. Both were placed in the same college and work done was exactly the same. "...Only when you come to the question of remuneration, you pay the one just twice as much as you pay the other. This is an anomaly which, I confess, I am not acute enough to be able to justify", Asutosh said.

In the same way, while discussing the provisions made for education in the budget of 1903-1904, Asutosh lamented the failure of Government to improve the status of the educational service and to bring it into line with the executive and judicial branches of Government service.

In January 1904 Asutosh was elected to the Viceroy's Legislative Council by the non-official members of the Legislative Councils of the Provinces after defeating his rival candidates Surendranath Banerjee and the Maharaja of Darbhanga.

He took his seat in the Imperial Legislative Council on the January 8, 1904. His membership of the Council ceased in June 1904, when he became a judge of the Calcutta High Court. During this short period, he took an important part in the deliberation of the Council.

On the day that he took his seat in the Council, a bill to amend the Transfer of Property Act of 1882 came

up for discussion and Asutosh criticized some important provisions of the bill.

The Indian Official Secrets (Amendment) Bill was taken up in the Council in March 1904. Asutosh moved amendments with a view to exclude correspondence on civil matters between the Government of India and the Indian States from the purview of the bill. The Viceroy, Lord Curzon, was keen on protecting such correspondence from exposure. He said, "I can conceive of nothing more unfortunate than that the relations of the Government of India, which in reality means the Viceroy's with the native Princes of India, relations prized by both of them, and in the vast majority of cases honourable to both of them, should be made the subject of disclosure and discussion in the Press with absolute impunity. Such a condition of affairs would not merely be distasteful to us but would be repugnant to them and would be injurious to the interests of the State". Asutosh replied, "I regret that I am unable to fall in with a view that the publication of information regarding the civil relations between the Government of India and the native states should be penalized in the manner proposed in the bill. It is conceivable that such publications may sometimes prove to be a source of serious inconvenience to individual officials concerned in transactions, which will not bear the light of day; but I venture to point out that it would be a distinct advantage, not only to a native state, but also to the Government of India, that the civil relations between the two should be of such a character as would stand the closest scrutiny. Surely, if they are of the character I have described, honest criticism need not be feared. If on the other hand, these relations are of a

very different complexion, the fullest and freest public discussion ought to be welcomed".[1]

At the close of the debate Asutosh recorded in strong words his protest against the part of the bill to which he had objected. He said, "I have no hesitation in stating that whatever the contentions of the Government may be, the provisions of the bill will operate as a serious menace to journalism in this country. I cannot help thinking that the endeavour to invest with a secret character, information relating to civil affairs, indicates a sense of weakness in the governing body and also perhaps an unconscious tendency to avoid legitimate friendly criticisms. If there is any country in which the right of free public discussion is essential to good Government, it is India, and there cannot be any reasonable room for doubt that the alarm which has been raised by eminent journalists of unquestionable repute; both European and Indian, is thoroughly well founded...We live, however, apparently in strange times when Government seems determined to push on this piece of repressive legislation which will be a standing menace to the liberty of the Press and to the fearless and honest criticism of state policy and which...would be a serious blot upon the statute book in any part of the Empire of Britain in the beginning of the twentieth century...I therefore deem it my duty to record my most emphatic protest against this bill, though I might have supported it if it had been limited in its operation only to naval and military matters".[2]

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[1] Abstract of Proceedings of the Viceroy's Legislative Council, March 4, 1904.

[2] *Ibid.*

Next came the Co-operative Credit Societies Bill which Asutosh welcomed wholeheartedly. He congratulated the Government upon this piece of legislation which, he said, "will rightly be regarded in future as the first serious effort at a successful solution of the problem of the amelioration of the economic condition of our vast agricultural population which had baffled the ingenuity of previous governments.[1]

The part which Asutosh took in the the discussions on the Indian Universities Bill of 1904 has been described in Chapter III.

When the Government of India budget for 1904-1905 came up for discussion, Asutosh referred to the surplus which the Finance Member had shown during each of the last four years and argued that there was good ground now for reduction of taxes. Two of the principal factors, he said, which had contributed to the surplus were *(i)* stability of exchange and *(ii)* increased taxation from 1883-1884 onwards. He argued that the artificial fixity of exchange had proved injurious to the poorer classes of the population. Then, additional taxes had been imposed from time to time upon grounds specified on the occasions. But those taxes had not be abolished after the removal of the grounds on which they had been imposed. Asutosh strongly pleaded for the abolition of the income tax which had been imposed to meet an emergency. He said, "Taxation is usually resorted to at a time when the Government finds itself face to face with a sudden and grave financial difficulty, in order to enable it to balance revenue with expenditure. Such

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[1] *Ibid*, March 23, 1904.

taxation ought to the continued only so long as this strained state of finance lasts: to retain a tax so imposed side by side with large surpluses appears to be contrary to all sound principles of finance, contrary to the purpose for which the tax is raised and liable ultimately to encourage extravagance".[1]

Asutosh further argued that the income tax was unpopular and led to oppression and corruption and was extremely unequal in its incidence. He quoted the opinion of two past Finance Members of the Viceroy's Council—Long (1862) and Massey (1868)—both of whom had argued that the income tax should be only of a temporary character.

Asutosh spoke strongly against the unfair mode of apportionment of military expenditure between the Indian and the British exchequer. He gave instances when successive Viceroys had vainly appealed to the British Government for a more equitable apportionment. He mentioned an occasion when one despatch from India had pleaded that, "The tax paying community of England is amongst the wealthiest, whilst that of India is amongst the poorest in the world". Asutosh commented, "It cannot surely be in consonance with justice or sound imperial policy that the wealthy and dominant race should relieve itself of charges at the expense of the poor and subject race, if the smallest doubt can be thrown on the equity of such proceeding".[2]

One important suggestion made by Asutosh to Government was that it should make arrangements to impart

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[1] *Ibid*, March 30, 1904.

[2] *Ibid.*

agricultural instruction throughout India. "What is required is not merely a Department of Agriculture of the Government of India...but also schools and facilities for elementary, secondary and advanced agricultural instruction", he said.

V. ASUTOSH AND THE CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY (1906—1914)

Speaking at the University Convocation of 1908, Lord Minto as Chancellor said, "I congratulate the University on its possession of Dr. Mookerjee as its Vice-Chancellor. He has assumed the reins of office at a turning point in the history of the University, for with its jubilee, the University enters not only on a new chronological era, but on a new regime, under new administrative conditions, the Incorporation Act of 1857 having as you know, been amended by the University Act of 1904...I know of no pilot more capable of steering the ship of learning through educational shoals and quicksands than Dr. Mookerjee". The new era inaugurated for the University was to be brought in by the application of the new regulations recently framed. The importance of the contribution made by Asutosh through the new regulations to the improvement of education in the vast territories over which the Calcutta University held its jurisdiction in those days can be understood only by a reference to the nature of these regulations. Changes of fundamental character were introduced in the regulations of the various examinations of the University. The nature of these changes had been explained by Asutosh thus in his Convocation speech of 1907 : "The aims of the regulation throughout has been to simply the examinations, to distinguish between the essential and the non-essential, to allow all students a wide choice and free scope as regards the latter, but to

demand thoroughness of knowledge from every candidate in the subjects of his choice. At the Matriculation stage, the courses must be so framed as to include subjects that would train and develop some power of expression, some power of reasoning, and some power of observation. To give the student some power of expression, unquestionably the best medium is his own language in the first place, with the structure and literature of what he ought to have a tolerable familiarity. The regulations consequently insist upon knowledge of student's own vernacular and power to practice composition, as essential to all stages of his career from Matriculation to Graduation. This recognition of the claims of the Indian vernaculars will, I believe, have far-reaching consequences of the healthiest character. But in addition to a knowledge of the vernacular, a student must, in order that he may have an adequate literary training, cultivate the power to write clear, simple and correct English and to form an intelligent comprehension of plain modern English on familiar subjects. He must in addition acquire some knowledge, accurate so far as it goes, of one classical language. If these languages are intelligently taught, if the student is made to appreciate the contrast of the languages in idiom, diction, method and manner, he ought to derive considerable intellectual discipline, and his power of expression ought to be developed on the right lines. To give him some power of reasoning he must learn the elements of Mathematics, which include a training in Geometry beginning with experimental work and gradually introduce him to the processes of geometrical reasoning. To ensure that he cultivates his power of observation, it would be desirable to give

him the rudiments of experimental physics or mechanics or inorganic chemistry. This, however, has not been found to be practicable, as by far the largest majority of our schools have no adequate equipment for the teaching of experimental subjects. The student is, therefore, allowed a choice of subjects which includes a general knowledge of the history of his country and a general knowledge of the geography of the world. It is obvious that a course of training of this description, if it is rightly pursued, and if unintelligent memory work is discarded, is bound to develop the intelligence and to qualify the student for admission to a course of University studies. No exceptional ability is needed in a student to complete such a course at the age of sixteen". These words of Asutosh should be read and reread at their bible by educationists of this country. In the Faculties of Law and Medicine changes of a fundamental character intended to promote thoroughness were introduced. In the Faculty of Law the system of teaching by cases and clauses for the discussion of legal problems was introduced. In the case of examinations in the Faculty of Medicine, the period of study for a degree was increased by one year, so as to give time for adequate practical training and hospital duties. A degree in teaching was introduced to enable professional teachers to have training in the theory and methods of teaching. The doctorate degree was instituted for the recognition and promotion of original research.

Sec. 3 of the Act of 1904 had changed the character of the University, which was now to be a teaching University and not merely an examining body. The Section had empowered the University to appoint Professors and

Lecturers. Regulations were consequently introduced to deal with the appointment of University Professors, Readers and Lecturers. As enjoined by the Act, Regulations laid down for conditions to be fulfilled by colleges for affiliation to the University and a provision was made for inspection of colleges by a University Inspector of Colleges. The Colleges became a part of the University and the University was to ensure that they were working in a satisfactory manner. It became the duty of all colleges, not only to promote intellectual discipline, but also to provide for the physical and moral welfare of the students. Regulations were therefore drawn up for residence of students. The Sadler Commission in its report commented : "The conditions of student life, and the character of the training afforded by the colleges were thus very materially improved as a result of the Act of 1904 and of the work which it set on foot, and we desire cordially to recognize the reality and value of their achievements."

The great national leader Surendranath Banerjee was a member of the Senate at the time. He has left on record in his book, 'A Nation in Making', his impression of Asutosh as Vice-Chancellor. "His long familiarity with the Calcutta University, his wide grasp of educational problems and his extraordinary capacity of dealing with them, made Sir Asutosh the most commending figure in the University. During the time he was Vice-Chancellor (and he held the office for several years) he ruled the University with a supreme sway; and it is but right to say that he enforced the regulations with a measure of discretion, a regard for all interests that partly allayed the suspicion and anxiety they had created

in the mind of the educated community of Bengali.[1]

Until about the middle of the fourth term of his Vice-Chancellorship, Asutosh enjoyed the confidence of the Government of India. And it was for this that his victory over Sir Bampfylde Fuller, Lt. Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam, was possible. This was in 1906, the first year of Asutosh's Vice-Chancellorship. The agitation against Lord Curzon's partition of Bengal was going on and the boys of two schools in Serajgung had behaved wildly in the town. The Education Department of Eastern Bengal and Assam had proposed that the Calcutta University should withdraw recognition from these schools, which were under private management, and the Chief Secretary wrote to the Registrar of of the Calcutta University accordingly. Asutosh Mukherjee pointed out the impropriety of the proposal to the Chancellor, Lord Minto, and asked that the University might be permitted to deal with this matter as it thought proper. Lord Minto agreed and the Government of India wrote to Sir Bampfylde Fuller pointing out that the withdrawal of recognition from these schools would be impolitic at the moment. Bampfylde Fuller was unconvinced and he asked that either the request of Government should be reconsidered or his resignation accepted. Minto gladly accepted Fuller's resignation. Thus the control of the University over schools was maintained. The first term of the Vice-Chancellorship of Asutosh was due to expire on March 31, 1908. In view of the enormous work facing the University in the coming months which the exa-

[1] S.N. Banerjee—A Nation in Making, p. 168.

mination of the teaching staff, library laboratory, etc. of the affiliated colleges and recognized schools and a variety of other duties involved, Government felt that the reappointment of Asutosh as Vice-Chancellor was essential, as in their view there was no other man capable of carrying out the whole business. At the same time Government felt that the work in the University combined with his judicial duties in the High Court would be too great a strain on Asutosh and he was given leave from the High Court and placed on deputation for University work for eight months from the January 1 to August 31, 1908. In this connection Sir A.H.L. Fraser, Lt. Governor, wrote, "Dr. Mookerjee's medical adviser consider that his illness in its severity, is largely due to breakdown for overwork... It would therefore be most unsafe for him to undertake the duties of Vice-Chancellor along with his official duties in the High Court".[1]

During the next few years, under the guidance of Asutosh, the Calcutta University made long strides towards reaching the full shape of a teaching and research University. The primary requisite of the University at the time was accommodation for post-graduate classes and a suitable library. In the one solitary building of the University, the Senate House, there was just enough accommodation for the administrative offices. The University was now no longer a merely examining body. Accommodation , therefore, was required for its new functions of teaching and research. Asutosh enlisted the sympathy of the wealthy aristocracy of the

[1] N.K. Sinha—Asutosh Mukherjee, p. 74.

country for the needs of the University and secured two princely gifts at this time. One was from Maharaja Rameswar Singh of Darbhanga who donated two and half lakhs and the other was from Sir Guruprasanna Ghosh of an equal amount. The second donation was to be utilized for sending Indian students to Europe, America and Japan for training in the arts and industries of those countries. The gift of the Maharaja of Darbhanga was supplemented by subvention from the Government amounting to two lakhs and contribution of two lakhs by the University. With the aid of these sums, the *bustee* to the west of the Senate House was acquired and the four-storeyed Darbhanga Building constructed. This new building accommodated the post-graduate classes including the classes of the University Law College, the University Library, and the administrative offices of the University. The University also acquired the land south of the Senate House measuring one and half bighas which was then occupied by a market. A sum of rupees one lakh and fifty thousand was paid out of its reserve fund by the University for the land. On the land was erected, in due course, the Asutosh Building which is used now for post-graduate classes in Arts and Commerce. In 1908 was also laid the foundation of the Calcutta University Press which was at the time located in a rented house in Colootala Street.

One of the great achievements of Asutosh was the foundation of the University Law College in 1909. Before this Law was being taught in the affiliated colleges. In 1908 there were eighteen colleges with affiliation in Law. The teaching staff in these colleges

was insufficient to meet the requirements of the new regulations. Law libraries were practically non-existent in these colleges. Realizing their deficiency and their inability to comply with the new regulations, Government decided to chose all Law classes attached to its colleges. Private colleges followed suit. Only the Ripon College of Calcutta chose to continue the Law classes. In July 1908 Asutosh Mukherjee moved in the Senate for the establishment of a University Law College and his motion was carried unanimously. The University Law College started functioning in July 1909. The Government of Bengal and the Government of India sanctioned annual grants for running the Law College. Private sources were not shy either as they had faith in Asutosh. The Maharaja of Cossimbazar donated Rs. 50,000 to the University Law College for founding a number of scholarships for students of Law to be awarded as a result of a competitive examination. Maharaja Pradyot Kumar Tagore made a gift of Rs. 10,000 to the College towards the founding of a Law library and also presented to the College the entire library of valuable Law book left by his grand-uncle, Prasanna Kumar Tagore. Onauthanath Deb made a gift in 1912 of Rs. 25.000 for the foundation of a research prize in Law. The University Law College was housed in the Darbhanga Library Building. The new regulation had provided for 'moot courts' for training of Law students. Asutosh himself frequently presided over the 'moot courts' and he also used to deliver lectures to the Law students.

Even before the building operations could start, Asutosh made the beginnings of higher teaching in the

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University. It was not possible to make adequate provision of money for all branches of study and for the time-being University lecturers were appointed for post-graduate teaching in those subjects in which lectures were urgently needed. Mr. Kosambi, a Marathi scholar, was appointed for teaching the Pali language and literature. Thus Calcutta University became the first University in India to take up the teaching of Pali. Acharya Satyabrata Samasrami was appointed for advanced instruction in the Vedas and Pandeya Ramavatar Sarma to lecture on Vednata Philosophy. Twelve post-graduate scholarships of Rs. 32 per month, tenable for two years, were instituted for distinguished graduates who desired to go up for the Master's degree. University Readership lectures were also instituted. Dr. Thibant delivered his lectures on the as tronomy of ancient oriental nations and Prof. Schustre on the progress of modern physics. These lectures aroused considerable enthusiasm amongst advanced students for higher knowledge.

The University was celebrating its 50th anniversary in 1908. Lord Minto, while addressing the Senate, announced that the Government of India would give an annual grant of Rs. 10,000 towards the establishment of a chair of Economic Science. This was named the Minto Professorship of Economics. Asutosh appointed a brilliant graduate of the Punjab University and of the Cambridge University, Prof. Manohar Lal, as the first Minto Professor.

Asutosh desired students of the University to come into contact with great minds of the West and East. The practice of appointing special University Readers

to lecture on special subjects was therefore begun in 1908 and followed in the succeeding years. Dr. Holland delivered lectures on the Geology of India. Dr. Gilbert Walker delivered a series of brilliant lectures on Mathematical Physics, Dineschandra Sen lectured on the history of Bengali language and literature and Prof. J.N. Das Gupta on Bengal in the sixteenth century. Other Readership lectures were delivered in those years by Dr. Cullis, Dr. Forsyth of Cambridge, Prof. Yamakami of Japan, Herman Oldenburg of Gothingen, Herman Jacobi, and Paul Vinagradoff. The lectures were attended by advanced students and teachers of the colleges and aroused great interest in research.

To encourage the spirit of research, tha regulations for the award of the Prem Chand Roy Chand Studentship were revised. The studentships used to be awarded on the results of a written examination. Subsequently they were awarded partly on the basis of a written examination and partly on research. Now they were to be awarded wholly on the research work done by the candidates.

Two eminent foreign scholars, whom the Senate had requested at the instance of Asutosh to deliver lectures at this time on special subjects, died before the lectures could be delivered. The material for their lectures however was available and the University took steps to publish the lectures. The two scholars were Prof. Pischell, a great German scholar, who was two have delivered lectures on the Philology of the Prakrit languages, and Dr. Theodre Bloch, another eminent scholar, who was due to speak on early Indian History.

In 1908 the University instituted Jubilee Research

prizes for original work in the fields of Physical and Natural Science, Philosophy, History, Philology etc. The object of Asutosh in inviting scholars from all over the world to speak on their researches to the students and teachers of the Calcutta University and in instituting the degree of Doctor of Philosophy bore fruit, and eminent teachers in the affiliated colleges of the University made their contributions to the advancement of knowledge in their respective subjects, on the basis of which they were awarded Doctorate in Philosophy. The earliest among them were Satischandra Acharya, Brajendranath Seal, Hiralal Haldar and Syamadas Mukherjee.

In January 1912 King George V while replying to the address of welcome presented to him by the University said : "No University is now-a-days complete unless it is equipped with teaching Faculties in all the more important branches of the Science and the Arts, and unless provides ample opportunities for research". Encouraged by these words, Asutosh approached the Government with the request for the foundation of two University Professorship, one, to be called the Regular Professorship, in commemoration of the visit of the King, for Indian History and Antiquities, and the other, a Professorship of Higher Mathematics to be associated with the name of Lord Hardinge. The Professorship in Ancient Indian History was not sanctioned and the University started the chair out of its own funds. Dr. Thibant was the first incumbent of this chair. Government however supplied funds for two chairs, one for the Hardinge Professor of Mathematics and another for the George V Professor of Philosophy. Dr. Frechet, Professor in the

University of Poitiars in France, was the first to be chosen as the Hardinge Professor of Mathematics and Dr. Brajendranath Seal was appointed to the chair in Philosophy.

The services of Asutosh were recognized by Government and he was Knighted at the Delhi Durbar in December 1911. In his convocation speech in 1912, Lord Hardinge referred to the 'able and effective guidance' of the University by Asutosh Mukherjee and testified that "under his guidance the Calcutta University has made considerable progress in the directions indicated by the Act".

At this time Government was co-operating with Asutosh in implementing the Act of 1904, and he was in consequence appointed to a fourth term as Vice-Chancellor. That the Chancellor also was inclined to see the Calcutta University developed into a teaching and research University was evident from the following words of Lord Hardinge : "I cannot, however, regard the facilities for higher studies as at all sufficient, when not a few students who wish to take the Degree of Master of Arts have to be turned away for want of accommodation. That our students are capable of higher work I have no doubt. I am informed that three research studentships on the Prem Chand Foundation have recently been awarded for theses in Mathematics, Chemistry and Indian Antiquities, all of which were pronounced by the examiners to evince special merit. The awards which have been made of the Coates Memorial Prize and the Darbhanga Memorial Scholarship indicate that there are capable men, able and willing, in the Medical Faculty to carry on research work. In

addition to this, the large number of essays submitted for the Griffith Memorial Prize makes it patent that many of our graduates are engaged in advance study and research work. It is very important that we should turn out good M.A.'s in sufficient numbers. Otherwise it will be difficult to find capable lecturers for our colleges, or to provide adequately for research". The Chancellor announced that Government had sanctioned an annual grant of Rs. 65,000 a year for the appointment of University professors and lecturers. The Calcutta University was also promised four lakhs for the provision of University buildings, libraries, and equipment. In addition there was to be a special grant of ten lakhs of rupees for hostel accommodation in Calcutta. It was decided to spend the annual grant of Rs. 65,000 in paying the salaries of the Hardinge Professor of Mathematics and the George V Professor of Philosophy and making grants to the University Law College and the University Library. Of the capital grant of four lakhs, three lakhs were spent on the construction of a hostel to be attached to the University Law College to be called the Hardinge Hostel and one lakh for the purchase of books and equipments for the University Library.

Asutosh had made some progress in the development of post-graduate teaching and research in the department of Humanities. But he had not been able to secure as yet funds for establishing the departments of Science and Technology in the University. There was no accommodation, no laboratories, no equipment. The establishment of a University College of Science and Technology, looked impossible. This was, however, soon made

possible by the princely gifts which Asutosh was able to secure from two eminent lawyers of Bengal. In June 1912 Taraknath Palit, an eminent barrister, made over to the University assets worth seven lakhs of rupees, four and a half lakhs in cash and two and a half lakhs in property, for the maintenance of two professorships, one in Chemistry and the other in Physics from out of the income of this endowment. Asutosh chose Dr. P.C. Ray, Professor in the Presidency College, for appointment to the Palit Chair of Chemistry and C.V. Raman of the Indian Audit and Accounts Service, who carried on research during off hours in the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, for the Palit Professor of Physics. Prof. P.C. Ray was a well-known scientist and he founded a School of Chemistry in Calcutta, the products of which like Prof. J.N. Mukherjee and Dr. J.C. Ghosh themselves acquired international reputation. Prof. C.V. Raman carried on researches which won for him the Noble Prize in Physics. In October 1912 Taraknath Palit made a second grant of seven and a half lakh of rupees to the University, which included his dwelling house, for the advancement of Science and Technology. One lakh out of this endowment was to be set apart by the University for maintaining scholarships for advanced students in Science to enable them to carry on research abroad.

The other well-known lawyer from whom Asutosh obtained a handsome endowment for his project was his former guru, Dr. Rashbehari Ghosh. In August 1913 the noble donor wrote to Asutosh : "I have now decided to make over to the University a sum of rupees ten lakhs in furtherance of the University College of Science

as projected by you with the sanction of the Senate". Four University Professorships were to be established, one for each of the following subjects—(*a*) Applied Mathematics, (*b*) Physics, (*c*) Chemistry, and (*d*) Botany with special reference to Agriculture. Besides the above, eight studentships of the annual value of nine hundred rupees were to be founded out of the income of the fund. Two students were to be attached to each Professor to carry on investigation under his guidance. The first occupants of the four chairs were Dr. Ganesh Prasad for Applied Mathematics, Dr. P.C. Mitra for Chemistry, Dr. D.M. Bose for Physics and Dr. S.P. Agharkar for Botany. It may be noted that of the ten University professors so far appointed, five were recruited from outside Bengal. Under Asutosh the Calcutta University assumed a cosmopolitan character.

It was natural for Asutosh to expect substantial grants from public funds to supplement these princely donations from private individuals. In October 1913 the University applied to the Government of India for an additional annual grant. The Government replied that the application of the University along with other claims, would be considered when funds were available. The University College of Science could not wait and Asutosh laid the foundation stone of the building on the March 27, 1914, four days before the end of his fourth term as Vice-Chancellor. The University proceeded to meet the cost of the erection of the college buildings from its reserve funds. In the speech which Asutosh made on the occasion, he lamented the unwillingness of the Government of India to make suitable grants to supplement the princely donations of

Pailt and Ghosh and stated how, in the circumstances, the University had to prune its original plans for the laboratories and equipment for the Science College. He said, "But although we are constrained to acquiesce in an humble beginning, our hopes are well founded. We confidently look forward to gradual expansion, to a life of sturdy growth and uninterrupted activity, for our cause is noble, and we are inspired by the invigorating belief that Science in its ultimate assertions echoes the voice of the living God". The refusal of the Government of India to consider the prayer of the University for grant of funds was an instance of the new attitude of hostility towards Asutosh and his University which the Education Department of the Government had developed.

The fortunes of the University had now fallen into the hands of narrow-minded bureaucrats. Henry Sharp was now the Joint Secretary of the Education Department of the Government of India. He had been at one time Inspector of Schools in the province of Eastern Bengal and Assam and had subsequently become Director of Public Instruction in that province. He had not forgotten the discomfiture of his erstwhile chief, Bampfylde Fuller, at the hands of Asutosh and now sought in every way to embarrass Asutosh and his University. The first sting was administered to the University by Sharp in May 1913. The University had reported the appointment of A. Rasul, Abdulla Suhrawardy and K.P. Jayswal as lecturers in the University for two years. Sharp wrote a strong note against these appointments. His objection was on the alleged ground that these gentlemen had taken part in political movements. Influenced by

Sharp's note the members of the Viceroy's Council did not sanction the appointments. In vain did Asutosh explain that the appointments had been made purely on academic grounds and that the Government had not so far laid down any rule that persons engaged in political movements were to be excluded from appointment as lecturers. In vain did the Senate pass resolutions requesting Government to reconsider their decision. Sharp had convinced his bosses that Asutosh was 'arrogant and overbearing' and that the University had displayed 'wonderful ingratitude'. It was apparent that Asutosh would not be appointed for a fifth term as Vice-Chancellor. To have an obedient Vice-Chancellor Government even thought of having a whole-time paid man for the post.[1] In December 1913 the members of the Senate met at a special convocation to present an address of welcome to the Chancellor, Lord Hardinge to express their heartfelt satisfaction at his recovery from the effects of the bomb attack on him. In the course of this address the Senators laid emphasis on the importance of having the co-operation of the Government of India in building up the new University. In his reply Lord Hardinge stated that he did not think that Government had shown themselves wanting in sympathy for the aims and objects of the University and pointed out the extent of financial assistance which the University had already received from his Government. As regards further financial help, as required by the University, he did not make any commitments. At this convocation, honorary doctorates were conferred on Prof. Vinogradolff, Prof.

[1] N. K. Sinha—Asutosh Mukherjee, pp. 102-03.

Jacobi, Prof. Young, Dr. Rashbehari Ghosh, Rabindranath Tagore, Mr. Hayden and Prof. Sylvain Levi.

On the expiry of Asutosh's fourth term of office as Vice-Chancellor on March 31, 1914, Devaprasad Sarbadhikary, a solicitor who was member of the Syndicate and represented the University on the Bengal Legislative Council, was appointed Vice-Chancellor. In the same year Asutosh's term of office as a member of the Senate expired. He had been, during the last twentyfive years, a nominated member of the Senate. Now, for the first time in his life, he came back to the Senate by the votes of the registered graduates. The registered graduates presented to the University a full length portrait of Asutosh in oil. A marble bust of Asutosh was presented by the principal, professors and students of the University Law College. It was unveiled by Lord Carmichael, Rector or the University, and stood at the head of the steps of the Darbhanga Building "welcoming scholars of the world seeking knowledge and truth". Earlier, the Senate had conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*.

The tremendous amount of labour which Asutosh had to undergo as Vice-Chancellor for reshaping the University can only be understood if one takes the trouble of going through the volumes or proceedings of the University bodies during those years. And we are filled with admiration at his capacity for undergoing hardship when we realize that he was performing his duties in the University in addition to the ardous work of a judge of the High Court. Addressing the convocation of the University on the March 28, 1914, he said, "The last 8 years in truth have been years

of unremittent struggle, difficulties and obstacles kept springing up like the heads of the Hydra, each head armed with sharp aud often venomous fangs...I have never spared myself. For years now, every hour, every minute I could spare from other unavoidable duties—foremost among them the duties of my judicial office—has been devoted by me to University work. Plans and schemes to heighten the efficiency of the University have been the subject of my day dreams into which even a busy man lapses from time to time, they have haunted me in the hours of nightly rest. To University concerns I have sacrificed all chances of study and research, possibly to some extent the interests of family and friends, and certainly, I regret to say, a good part of my health and vitality. Do not imagine, however, that I repine at the sacrifices made. I have had my reward in many ways. I need not remind you that great comfort springs from the consciousness of rectitude of purpose, from the conviction that the cause to which one devotes all his strength and for which one renounces the ordinary delights of life, is a high and sacred one". The stirring words with which Asutosh concluded this speech deserve to be quoted here: "When all is said and done, there is alive in the depths of my soul the unshakeable conviction that I and my helpers have, during these last years, fought a good fight, that the light which has kept backoning us onward on our rough and dark path was not the fitful gleam of a will-o-the-wisp, but the steady radiance of a pure and holy flame for ever burning in a glorious temple however far remote—a shrine dedicated to the worship of truth and the ideal. Let us, therefore, advance, the banner of

progress in hand, with bold but not unwary steps, drawing confidence and inspiration from the consciousness that so many of the best and truest men of our people are in full sympathy with us, that the rising generation has availed itself with eagerness, nay enthusiasm, of the new opportunities we have created for higher studies; that the sparks of the new inextinguishable fire kindled in our midst have already leapt to all parts of India, and that the sister Universities are eager to imitate and emulate what we have boldly initiated. I feel that a mighty new spirit has been aroused, a spirit that will not be quenched; and this conviction, indeed, is a deep comfort to me at the moment when I take leave from work dear to me for so many weighty reasons".

The Chancellor did not attend but sent a message to the convocation expressing the gratitude of the Government of India to Sir Asutosh Mukherjee for all the good work he had done for the University. The convocation was presided over by Lord Carmichael, the Rector. He said, "There are many others besides the members of the Government of India who are grateful to Sir Asutosh. I do not believe there is any one connected with the University of Calcutta, I doubt whether there is any educated man in Bengal, who is not grateful to him. The good work which he has done for the University has been very good. and it has been done with untiring energy. Sir Asutosh become Vice-Chancellor on the March 31, 1906—eight years ago—during all those eight years he has worked hard, and it was with justifiable pride that he has himself referred to what he has done. Few men

have the great capacity Sir Asutosh has for working without intermission. No one can say he has ever neglected his duty as a High Court Judge—and I believe that duty is in itself arduous enough—yet, all the time, he has been doing work for his University as Vice-Chancellor which I am often told may well be considered a man's full work...He has shown himself able to grasp large schemes, and at the same time has shown himself able to grasp and work out the most minute detail. No proposal has seemed to him so bold or so far-reaching that he was not ready to consider it when put before him; ne point which arose at the moment was so small or so trivial that he would not pause to deal with it at once. His knowledge of men is vast, specially of the educated community in Bengal for whom he has worked. I am told that he knows intimately every M.A. of any distinction and that there is none holding that degree from the Calcutta University with whom he is not acquainted. He has an infinite capacity for taking pains. He has never shirked drudgery. Ready in debate, prompt and firm in giving decisions, he has, I believe, been a most expert chairman at meetings. I dare say this has sometimes helped him to get his own way when his way was not quite that of others, but he has always been practical; he has aimed at getting something done quickly, and he is open to conviction, even if he be hard to convenience".

VI. ASUTOSH AND THE CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY (1914—1923)

The officials of the Government of India soon found to their utter dismay that, though Asutosh no longer occupied the Chair, he continued to exercise the same influence and authority as if he was the Vice-Chancellor. In April 1915 Henry Sharp wrote a note suggesting that the best policy would be "to deprive the University of financial assistance till it has brought some measure of reform".[1] A Committee of Enquiry into the affairs of the University was talked of. But the Education Member of the Government of India was not sure about the outcome of such a Committee. In October 1915, Harcourt Butler wrote, "with Sir Asutosh Mukherjee, all powerful, we would have no enquiry into the University which will come to anything".[2]

The refusal of the Government of India to make any further grant over and above the funds already sanctioned created an actual situation in the University. The continuance of the post-graduate departments was at stake. Asutosh was not opposed to such a Committee. He believed that a full and free interchange of opinion between the Government and the University about post-graduate teaching would ease the situation. In 1916 Sankaran Nair became the Education Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. This improved the situation. A Committee was appointed under the

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[1] N.K. Sinha—Asutosh Mukherjee, p. 204.

[2] *Ibid.*

Chairmanship of Asutosh Mukherjee to review the arrangements for post-graduate teaching in the Calcutta University. This Committee was to make suggestions whereby the existing expenditure and the available resources for M.A. classes may be put to the best use.

Besides the Chairman, there were six members, four of whom were Europeans. On December 12, 1916 this Committee submitted a unanimous report which outlined a scheme for the consolidation of post-graduate studies in the University. This Committee recommended that the control of post-graduate teaching in Arts and Science should be placed entirely under the University. Hitherto there were two colleges in Calcutta affiliated for M.A. and M.Sc. teaching. The Committee recommended that the affiliation of colleges in Calcutta for M.A. and M.Sc. work should cease and that the organization of post-graduate teaching should be wholly in the hands of the University. This did not mean that the staff of the colleges were to confine themselves to under-graduate teaching only. The Committee was of the view that the association of the colleges not only in the actual teaching but also in the work of organizing the higher teaching of the University was an essential factor of the scheme. Since post-graduate teaching was to be centralized in the University, the appointment of a whole-time and salaried University staff was necessary. Two Post-graduate Councils were to be created, one for Arts and the other for Science, vested with full powers for the organization and control of post-graduate teaching. Each Council was to have an executive committee and a president. There was protracted debate in the Senate over the recommendations of the Committee,

but the sheer driving forces of Sir Asutosh won the acceptance of the Senate, which also framed regulations with a view to carry them into execution. On June 26, 1917, the Government of India accorded their sanction to the regulations. The new authorities were constituted within two months and the system was brought into operation on September 1, 1917. Asutosh was elected President of the Post-graduate Council in Arts as well as of the Post-graduate Council in Science. This was a great triumph for Asutosh. A fresh advance had been made in the way of development of a teaching University at Calcutta "of which the foundation had been silently and unobtrusively laid a few years earlier". Of the members of the Committee, Hornell, the Director of Public Instruction of Bengal, and W.C. Wordsworth, Principal, Presidency College, were expected to oppose the scheme of centralization of post-graduate studies. But they agreed with Asutosh and the report was unanimous. In every matter Asutosh showed his capacity of winning over opponents to his side by the cogency of his reasoning.

In September 1917 it was announced by the Government of India that "the Governor General in Council has decided to appoint a Commission to enquire into the conditions and prospects of the University of Calcutta and to consider the question of a constructive policy in relation to the questions which it presents". Dr. M.E. Sadler, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leeds, was appointed the President of the Commission. Sir Asutosh was appointed one of the seven members, though he was not the Vice-Chancellor of the University. It was obvious that, with Sankaran Nair as Education Member,

Sharp was not having everything his own way. The Commission assembled during the first week of November 1917. The members of the Commission took down evidence, toured different parts of India, visited most of the educational centres, many of the colleges and schools, and presented a voluminous report to the Government of India in March 1919. The report written with clearness of vision and lucidity of expression is considered to be a monument of wisdom, "one of the weightiest of educational sermons ever preached". It is difficult to assess the exact contribution of Asutosh to the report. He did not write any note of dissent. He was conscious of the shortcomings of the educational system of the province and always welcomed constructive suggestions for its improvement. Sadler developed the highest opinion about Asutosh and perhaps it would be correct to say that he benefited by Asutosh's vast knowledge of the educational field in this country. We are told that Sadler used to join Sir Asutosh in his morning walks on the *maidan* and discuss with him matters connected with the work of the Commission. Asutosh could not but have substantially contributed to the report. The report runs into five volumes and covers practically the whole sphere of education. We can therefore set out here only a few of its recommendations, viz., those that have a bearing on the biography of Asutosh.

The Commission recommended the creation of a real teaching University in Calcutta. The report recognized the value of the achievements of the post-graduate department of the Calcutta University and in doing so indirectly supported Asutosh. The report stated that a new spirit of enquiry and research had been aroused by

the post-graduate system. It recommended that a grant of Rs. 1,25,000 a year should be made immediately by the Government with a view to increase the salaries of the members of the post-graduate staff. The Commission recommended that as many as twentyseven new departments of studies, not represented in the University of Calcutta, or its colleges, should be established, if funds permitted. The Commission also suggested the creation of a number of Chairs among which may be mentioned Chairs in Indian Philosophy and Religion, Vedic Language, Literature and Culture and Indian Anthropology. The report stated that the system of training in law which 'Asutosh had instituted' seemed to be working well. The scientific study of the Vernaculars was to be encouraged in the University. Candidates for the Matriculation examination were to be permitted to answer questions either in their own Vernacular or in English. Mathematics and English were, however, to be exempted from this principle. The Commission pleaded for a new educational outlook. Necessary reforms could not be carried out without larger funds. "What the Commission proposed might at first sight appear too exacting a burden upon the public revenues. But their belief was that the expenditure which they recommended would be remunerative, not only in its effect upon the sources of the moral strength but also upon the economic welfare of the country and upon its civic and industrial initiative...If it were urged that the tax-payers of Bengal were too poor to be able to pay for the advantages of such an improved education, the answer of the Commission was that, Bengal was too poor to be able to afford the waste of ability which was caused by the

present system. If the Government spent adequately out of its funds, such expenditure, in the opinion of the Commission, "would, in the long run, be an economy, as well as in other ways, a boon to Bengal, and through Bengal to India and the world".[1] These words have a striking similarity to the views held by Asutosh throughout his life.

Though the Commission had been appointed explicitly for the reform and reorganization of the Calcutta University, the Government did nothing to implement the recommendations of the Commission. The financial difficulties of the University continued while Government added to them by starting new Universities and thereby reducing the number of students on whose examination fees the Calcutta University counted. However, the post-graduate departments under the stewardship of Asutosh continued to render good work in the sphere of higher teaching and research. Sir Nilratan Sircar, Vice-Chancellor, in his Convocation speech in January 1920, described the work being done in the post-graduate departments of the University thus "the most valuable achievement of the post-graduate department during the year was perhaps the impetus that it gave to the work of research. The teachers are mostly graduates of brilliant attainments. Many of them are engaged not only in instructing the students, but also in carrying on and directing research work. In the Science department out of 82 published papers, based on original investigation, 60 were the production of the teachers, 14 were the result of joint efforts of professors and

[1] Hundred Years of the University of Calcutta, p. 194-195.

students, and 8 were the result of independent research by students. The record of progress in the Arts department in the domain of research is not less encouraging. This department has been engaged in research in more the 20 different subjects. The results of these researches are bound to make valuable addition to our stock of knowledge. Over 25 papers based on original investigation have also been published. Besides these 15 papers on important subjects are in course of preparation. Some of the original publications of the post-graduate department have attracted notice in learned circles in Europe and America. It is significant that the work of the department is being carried on by a band of devoted teachers, most of whom receive only an inadequate remuneration. It is love of learning, a spirit of research and a zeal for the spread of knowledge that have impelled them to undertake the work in which they have been engaged, not love of gain. The post-graduate department is full of promise. But the department is working under various disadvantages and drawbacks. We require more accommodation and larger funds, funds for the provision of residence for students, for the extension of the library, for additions to the laboratories, for strengthening the staff and for expansion in various directions".

Though Asutosh failed to get the required help from public funds, he was fortunate enough to secure two substantial endowments from private sources which went a long way towards the expansion of the post-graduate departments in Arts and Science.

In 1913 Sir Rashbehari Ghosh had made a gift of Rs. ten lakhs in aid of the University College of

Science. In December 1919 he offered another sum of Rs. 11,43,000, the income from which was to be applied exclusively for the purposes of technological instruction and research. Two new University professorships were to be established, one in Applied Chemistry and the other in Applied Physics. Four additional studentships were to be established, such students to be attached two each to the above professorships. The balance which remain out of the annual income of the fund, after the payment of the salaries of the professors and the studentships, was to be applied to the equipment and maintenance of the necessary laboratories, museums and workshops, "the adequate provision for which is absolutely necessary, and for which sufficient money had not been available from other funds at the disposal of the University". Eminent scientists like Prof. H.K. Sen and Prof. P.N. Ghosh were appointed to the Chairs respectively in Applied Chemistry and Applied Physics.

By the decree of the Calcutta High Court, in the suit of Rani Bagiswari Debi against Kumar Guruprasad Singh of Khaira, a sum of Rs. 4,60,000 and the land and house at 3, Camac Street, Calcutta, became vested in the University, subject to the interest of the Rani. The Rani offered Rs. 6,50,000 to the University for purchase of reversionary interest from the University. The court empowered Sir Asutosh to prepare a scheme for utilizing the gift. Sir Asutosh's scheme was adopted by the Senate in August 1921. Five University professorships were to be established, one for each of the following subjects: (1) Indian Fine Arts; (2) Phonetics; (3) Physics; (4) Chemistry; and (5) Agriculture. In view of the extreme financial strait of the University,

Sir Asutosh included the following clause in his scheme:

"That the Senate shall be at liberty to pledge temporarily and for a period not exceeding two years, a sum not exceeding three lakhs out of the securities of the fund to borrow money to carry on post-graduate teaching and research.

PROVIDED that no such pledge shall be effected without the previous written consent of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee".

The three lakhs of rupees mentioned in the scheme represented the then gap between revenue and expenditure in the working of the post-graduate department of the University.

The first occupant of the Chair of Indian Fine Arts was the famous artist, Abanindranath Tagore. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, now the National Professor, was appointed to the Chair of Indian Phonetics and Linguistics. Meghnad Saha, who subsequently became a fellow of the Royal Society of England and came to be known as a scientist of international reputation, was appointed to the Chair of Physics. J.N. Mukherjee, who also came to occupy an important position among scientists of the world, was appointed to the Chair in Chemistry. The professorship of Agriculture went to Nagendranath Ganguly who subsequently became a member of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India.

After the Government of India Act of 1919 came into force, the Government of India divested themselves of all responsibility in connection with the University and handed over the institution to the Government of Bengal.

This was carried out by legislation which became operative on April 27, 1921. While taking this momentous step, the Government of India did not make any arrangement to enable the Government of Bengal to meet the financial liability in respect of the University. Henceforth the Governor of Bengal was to be the Chancellor of the University and not its Rector as before.

On February 5, 1921 the University asked for financial help from the Government of Bengal for the development of higher teaching in the University. It requested that a capital grant of ten lakhs may be made, in addition to a grant of one lakh and seventyfive thousand rupees, for meeting the salaries of post-graduate teachers. On March 15, 1921 the Government of Bengal made a grant of one lakh and seventyfive thousand for improvement of the post-graduate department of the University. It also made a capital grant of Rs. 10,000 for technological studies. The Government of Bengal at the same time informed the University that it would be unable to comply if the University asked for further grants. The University was also informed that the Government of Bengal was unable to implement the recommendations of the Sadler Commission on account of financial stringency.

While the University was passing through these difficulties, the Non-Cooperation Movement came to aggravate the situation further. Students began to leave schools and colleges and refrain from appearing in examinations held by the 'golam khana'. The income from the examination fees fell. Under the rules, one-third of the fee fund was spent on the post-graduate department. Now this source of income for the post-graduate department was reduced. The post-graduate teachers

worked without receiving their salaries for several months. It was only the loyalty of the teachers to the University and personally to Sir Asutosh that saved the post-graduate department from a total collapse. It has to be remembered that these teachers were men with brilliant academic records and for the mere asking might have got lucrative jobs under the Government or in the new Universities that were springing up.

Asutosh regarded the desertion of schools and colleges by thousands of students as a national calamity. He was no less a patriot than any political leader, but his method of achieving the goal was different. He was of the opinion that the spread of education was the surest preparation for achieving freedom. He knew the economic condition of the average Bengali family and was convinced that education once interrupted would not in most cases be resumed. What were these boys who had been rendered idle to do in future? Addressing the students at the height of the Non-Cooperation Movement he said, "you want a *Swadeshi* (National) University. Is not Calcutta University your National University? The Senate and the Syndicate are in the hands of the Bangalees. It is fostered by the donations of the sons of Bengal. Everyone is in national dress. There is no foreign influence here. Should you insult this noble patriotism, this generous sacrifice?"

Speaking at a Convocation of the University on March 24, 1921, Lord Ronaldshay, Governor of Bengal, pointed out the important work which the Calcutta University under the guidance of Sir Asutosh was doing for the nation and announced his intention of inviting Sir Asutosh to accept the Vice-Chancellorship. He said,

"Surely, you must be proud of the splendid attempt which is being made here to render to Indian Civilization and Culture the homage which is its due. Teaching of the highest order, along with research work by Indian scholars of repute, is being carried on in a number of branches of advanced Sanskrit which in themselves cover a wide field of ancient Indian learning, in Pali which embraces the far-reaching field of Buddhistic studies, in Islamic studies including Theology, Literature, Rhetoric, Poetics, Grammar, Philosophy and Science, in Indian vernaculars and in the elaborate course of study devoted to Ancient Indian History and Culture. Surely, the gratitude and support of every Indian, who truly loves his country, is due to the man, who has done so much for Indian learning. That man is himself an Indian among Indians, Sir Asutosh Mukherjee. But Sir Asutosh Mukherjee's claim to your support does not rest solely upon the fact that he has created this great department of post-graduate teaching and research. He was also a member of the University Commission whose recommendations are designed to introduce into the existing system of higher education, many improvements and in particular to bring about changes in two directions... that is to say by developing vocational courses and by giving to the whole system a more specifically Indian Orientation". He appealed to people to support Sir Asutosh as Vice-Chancellor, because "no man surely is better qualified so to mould the future of your University as to make it a national University in the best and truest meaning of the word".

After a gap of seven years Sir Asutosh again occupied the Vice-Chancellor's Chair on April 4, 1921. Though

he was not the Vice-Chancellor, the direction of affairs of the University had been in his hands. He continued to be a member of the Senate and the Syndicate, the Faculties and most of the Boards. He was moreover President of the two Post-graduate Councils in Arts and Science. During these years he had concentrated on post-graduate teaching in the University and had given an organization to the post-graduate department. With the assistance of princely donations from private sources a number of professorships and studentships had been created. He had staffed the post-graduate department with scholars from all over India. Readership lectures had been delivered by the most distinguished scholars in their many respective subjects from European Universities. The University of Calcutta had well high become a cosmopolitan University. Research had received a great stimulus at his hands and teachers and students in the post-graduate departments were engaged in widening the bounds of knowledge.

One of the greatest achievements of Asutosh was the institution of courses of study in the Indian vernaculars for the M.A. examination of the University. He had always held that "if the Indian Universities are to be indissolubly associated with the national life, they must ungrudgingly accord due recognition to the irresistible claims of the Indian vernaculars". We have noted in a previous chapter how in 1891 Asutosh as a young Senator had moved resolutions in the University designed to give the Indian vernaculars a place in the curricula of the University up to the M.A. standard and how he had failed. He had pursued this single objective so dear to his heart throughout his life, and when it fell to him to

draft the new Regulations in consequence of the Act of 1904, he made Indian vernaculars a compulsory subject for the Matriculation, Intermediate and B.A. examinations of the University.

In 1913 Asutosh set the seal of academic recognition of the Vernacular of the province by conferring the degree of Doctor of Literature on Rabindranath Tagore, "a loyal and life-long devotee of the most progressive of the Indian vernaculars".

In 1918 the University, on the initiative of Sir Asutosh sanctioned a scheme for the preparation of a series of volumes of typical selections from all the Indian vernaculars from the earliest stages of their development to modern times. The object was to include them as subjects for the degree of Master of Arts. In 1919 Asutosh opened the Post-graduate Department of Indian vernaculars in the University. For the first time in the history of an Indian Universty, it became possible for an Indian to take the highest degree on the basis of his knowledge of his mother-tongue and the mother-tongue of his fellow Indians. The scheme required that a student shouldposse ss knowledge of two Vernaculars, namely, a thorough knowledge of his mother-tongue and a less comprehensive knowledge of a second Vernacular. The student was also required to obtain a working knowledge of two of the languages which form the foundation of the Indian vernaculars, such as Pali, Prakrit and Persian. The languages recognized as principal languages were Bengali, Hindi, Urdu and Assamese. The languages recognized as subsidiary languages were Bengali, Assamese, Oriya, Hindi, Urdu, Maithili, Gujarati, Marathi, Telugu, Tamil, Kanarese,

Malayalam and Sinhalese. Besides these, the student had to acquire a comparative knowledge of his philology of his particular Vernacular. The scheme was an effective blow to the barriers of narrow provincialism. It may truly be said that Asutosh was working for national integration long before others had moved in that direction. In addition to the Indian languages, the University took up the teaching of French, German, Chinese, Japanese and Tibetan.

But how was Asutosh accomplishing this great national task when an unsympathetic government was starving the University. Asutosh has described how generous was the response which he received from all over India and that had enabled, him to tide over his difficulties. He said, "...Scholars from different parts of India have gladly accepted our invitation to collaborate in the accomplishment of this great national task... Several men of culture have come forward to the assistance of this University. The Maharaja of Sonepur ...has generously contributed to the cost of publication of the Oriya selections. The Holkar of Indore has expressed his readiness to associate himself with the publication of the Marathi selections. Mr. R.D. Mehta ...has contributed a substantial amount towards the cost of publication of the selections from the *Zend Avesta :* Mr. Bholanath Baroah...has offered a handsome donation of Rs. 10,000 to meet the cost of publication of the Assamese selections....Mr. Sanat Kumar Mookerjee has presented to us a large and valuable collection of Bengali manuscripts which will furnish an extensive field for research in the domain of Indian vernaculars. Mr. T. Chaudhuri of Dinajpur

is maintaining a lectureship in Maithili, while Raja Kirtyanand Singh and his co-shares are maintaining the Banelia Srinagar lectureship for research work in Maithili, Mr. Gopaldas Chaudhuri of Mymensingh is maintaining a lectuership in Bengali, and the Maharaja of Sonepur has provided funds for the maintenance of a lectureship in Oriya". Only a man like Asutosh could have enlisted such help.

In April 1921 the Syndicate of the Calcutta University accepted with thanks a gift from Sir Asutosh of government securities amounting to Rs. 3,000 with a view to instituting a gold medal of the value of Rs. 200 to be bestowed once in every two years upon the individual deemed by the Syndicate to be most eminent for original contribution to Letters or Science written in the Bengali language. The medal was to be called the 'Jagattarini Medal' after the name of his mother. The first recipient of the medal was Dr. Rabindranath Tagore.

Asutosh was always on the look out for the most talented men in India to fill up the posts in his post-graduate department. In 1921 Brajendranath Seal was appointed Vice-Chancellor of the Mysore University and Asutosh secured the services of Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan as George V Professor of Philosophy in his place. The great eminence to which Prof. Radhakrishnan rose later on in life showed how keen was Asutosh's faculty of discerning merit.

In the year 1919, Asutosh completed the 25th year of his Doctorate. His admirers thought that the occasion should be commemorated. A Committee of eminent scholars was accordingly formed under the presidentship of Dr. Henry Stephen, Professor of

English in the University, to consider the best means of commemorating the occasion. It was decided to arrange for the preparation of a set of volumes dealing with the Arts and Letters, Science and Orientalia, which would be presented to him as a tribute for the respect, affection and admiration they had for him. These volumes were presented formally to Sir Asutosh at a Convocation on March 18, 1922 by the Chancellor, Lord Ronaldshay. These 'Silver Jubilee Volumes' constitute a unique collection of contributions to learning of members of the University. "No more suitable from could have been found for a gift designed to commemorate his great and peculiar services to the cause of education and learning in his country".

At this Convocation Lord Ronaldshay pointed out the difficulty of his having to play the dual role of the Chancellor of the University and Governor of the Presidency. As Chancellor of the University, he unreservedly praised the work done by the post-graduate department and said that, though post-graduate work was costly, it was of great utility to the nation and those who were against expenditure on post-graduate teaching were taking a narrow view. As Governor, however, he recommended cautious expansion of University activities as help from public funds was difficult to obtain. As Chancellor he said, "the greatest landmark in the history of the University in recent years is undoubtedly the creation of the Council of Post-graduate Studies. As Rector of the University of the time, I gave the scheme my wholehearted support, because it seemed to me that it was calculated to establish in Calcutta, under the auspices of the University, a real centre of learning and

research, and to do much by resuscitating interest in the ancient culture of the country .. I had in mind famous Indian Universities of the past age, such for example as Nalanda. And I had visions of a modern Nalanda growing up in the greatest and most populous city of the Indian Empire. He went on to explain why the average man thought expenditure on advanced teaching as unnecessary. In his opinion such a view was a narrow one. "It assumes that the work of the post-graduate department is carried on for the exclusive benefit of the limited number of persons who partake of it. Such a view is surely not tenable. The results of post-graduate work react upon the country as a whole. It is this department of the University which is charged with the duty, which many would describe as the supreme duty of a University, namely that of adding to the sum total of human knowledge. It must not be forgotten that discoveries in science, for example, may result in enormously increasing the wealth of a nation. Moreover, I do not think that any nation can take a leading place among the foremost peoples of the world unless it is in a position to make its contribution to the progress of human thought". It was a complete justification of the work of Asutosh. At the same time, he said, "I am not disposed to deny that in a poor country there are obvious limits to the extent to which such studies can be financed by public funds. The Legislature will, I hope, be prepared to make some additional contribution towards the University in its persent difficulties. But the Legislature itself, with extremely exiguous resources, is faced with many urgent demands. And under the circumstances it appears to me

that the University may have to consider whether it is bound to provide post-graduate teaching in every subject in which it is prepared to examine and confer awards...".

But the Legislature made no additional contribution to the University. In the budget of 1922-23 there was provision of rupees nine lakhs for the Dacca University, whereas the Calcutta University was not to have anything beyond its annual recurring grant of Rs. 1,41,000. On March 1, 1923, Provas Chandra Mitra, the Education Minister, in his speech before the Bengal Legislative Council, declared that the deficit of rupees five lakhs in the University was due to "thoughtless expansion of the University in the past". He remarked that the financial management of the University was deplorable. "The authorities of the Calcutta University were actuated by their laudable enthusiasm to develop post-graduate studies. But surely...they should have realized that the sound financial way of dealing with a matter like this was not act on mere hope of getting doles from the Government of India...It was almost criminal thoughtlessness to have ignored the financial aspect of the question in their enthusiasm for expansion... I have no doubt that the present Vice-Chancellor (Asutosh Mukherjee), who is one of the ablest men that we have not only in this province but in the whole of India, will see the wisdom of my advice, and if he makes up his mind, I am sure, things will be easy in the Calcutta University".

Asutosh gave a full justification of the Post-graduate Department in the Convocation speech on the March 18, 1922. He pointed out that the teaching departments of the University had been started in pursuance

of an Act of the Imperial Legislature, the Act of 1904, and post-graduate teaching had been consolidated in the University in 1917 with the sanction of the Government. He took up deparment by department and justified the expenditure on each. He asserted that "plans for University development...have been neither casual nor accidental. They have their solid basis on the rock of a definite conception of the true function of the University in the life of the Nation... The University canc ontribute to the welfare of the people in freedom, health and wealth, if it sends forth streams of liberally educated men and women to be leaders of public opinion and to be practitioners in all the brain-working professions of our time, from law, medicine, engineering and commerce to architecture, agriculture, banking, journalism and public administration. A University so designed for the service of the Nation in all possible phases of its development cannot be restricted to a narrow or chosen teaching, much starved altogether in its activities".

On August 23, 1922 the Government of Bengal informed the University that it would make an additional grant of Rs. 2,50,000, but that this grant would be subject to eight conditions. The Senate on September 9, 1922 appointed a Committee with Asutosh Mukherjee as Chairman to examine the letter of the Government together with the conditions laid down. The report of this Committee was discussed at a meeting of the Senate on December 2, 1922. Prof. P.C. Ray, who was a member of the Committee, in moving the adoption of the report said, "A perusal of Government's letter leads us to the conclusion that the Government desires to utilize the present financial embarrassment of the

University to obtain control over its affairs in a manner not contemplated by the Indian Universities Act of 1904... The conditions which have been imposed are so humiliating, so gallingly derogatory to our self-respect, that we had better close down the concern, lock up the gates of the University and go about the country for support... A grave crisis is looming large in the horizon of our national progress. We are threatened with a national disaster... We should gird up our loins and see that the noble heritage which has been granted to us is not bartered for a mess of pottage".

Supporting the motion, Principal Howells said, "It is undoubtedly a sound principle that no institution should spend money beyond its income. That applies to individual institutions and also to Government. When we hear that the Government of Bengal has a deficit of some rupees eightyseven lakhs, and when it comes to us with a very superior air and seeks to chastise us for the few lakhs that we have gone beyond our income, it is only human nature to reply, 'physician heal thyself'... It will be a betrayal of the great trust imposed on us as a University, if we yield...". Sir Asutosh's speech in the Senate on the occasion was a classic one. He said, "Take it from me that as long as there is one drop of blood in me, I will not participate in the humiliation of this University. The University will not be a manufactory of slaves. We want to think truly. We want to teach freedom. We shall inspire the rising generation with thoughts and ideas that are high and ennobling. We shall not be a part of the Secretariat of the Government. Forget not that what is offered is not even a periodical grant much less a perpetual grant. What is the offer? Two and a

half lakhs? And you solemnly propose that you should barter away your independence for it... If you gave me slavery on the one hand and money in the other, I despise the offer. We will not take the money. We shall retrench and we shall live within our means. We shall go from door to door all through Bengal. We shall rouse the public conscience of Bengal...and make the people of Bengal realize their responsibility for the maintenance in a state of efficiency, of their chief seat of learning... Our post-graduate teachers will starve themselves, rather than give up their freedom...I call upon you as members of the Senate to stand up for the rights of your University. Forget the Government of Bengal. Forget the Government of India. Do your duty as Senators of this University, as true sons of your *Alma Mater*. Freedom first, freedom second, freedom always, nothing else will satisfy me".

The Government yielded and made the grant of Rs. 2,50,000 without conditions. Only the Vice-Chancellor was requested to reorganize the accounts of the University in consultation with the Accountant General of Bengal.

The crisis in the University deepened in 1923. In addition to financial difficulties of a serious nature, the University was threatened by reactionary legislative proposals. Early in the year the Chancellor of the University, Lord Lytton, sent confidentially to Asutosh as Vice-Chancellor copies of two bills for the reform of the University and the creation of a Board of Secondary Education. The Senate, at its meeting on January 23, 1923 appointed a Committee with Asutosh as Chairman to examine the bills and submit a report. Two more

University bills then arrived and were also taken up for examination by the Senate. These were framed by Surendranath Mallick and Jatindranath Basu, non-official members of the Bengal Legislative Council. As regards the Government bills, the Senate informed the Chancellor that in its opinion the proposals should be first made known to the public. As regards non-official bills, the Senate declared their object was 'not educational but political'. Their object, according to the Senate, was to 'secure the supremacy of the Minister of Education in University affairs". According to the Senate, all the four bills made a fundamental departure from the recommendations of the Sadler Commission. Moreover, they were open to objection on the ground that they made no provision for financial assistance to the University.

This was a time of great physical and mental strain for Asutosh. On the top of the numerous meetings in the University, he carried on an enormous correspondence with Lord Lytton, the Chancellor, to supply the facts and give him a correct picture of the state of affairs. In the midst of all this, his heart was torn by the death of his dear daughter, Kamala.

Asutosh's term of office was due to expire on April 3, 1923. On the March 24, 1923 he addressed the Convocation of the University for the last time. He described how, to the dismay of its enemies, the work of the University has been steadily continued in the midst of unsettled and perilous circumstances. "...The work of our University teachers in every department has been successfully carried on amidst financial difficulties of the gravest character. It is my pleasant duty to grate-

fully acknowledge that the whole-time University teachers, who cannot look forward to any external source of income, voluntarily kept a substantial portion of their salaries in abeyance, while lecturers who are connected with colleges or may rely on other sources of income have, in many instances, ungrudgingly continued their association with our work without any remuneration. To crown all Prof. Sir Prafulla Chandra Ray... has offered to surrender his entire salary for a term of five years...". Asutosh noted with satisfaction how research .work by the teachers of the University was making satisfactory progress. Five of them had obtained the degree of Doctor of Science and four the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The University teachers and research workers had contributed paper after paper to all the learned journals of the world". As regards the paramount need for autonomy in a University, he referred to the opinions expressed by the Royal Commission on the Universities of Great Britain, by Sir Harcourt Butler in his capacity as Chancellor of the University of Allahabad and by Sir Reginald Craddock as Chancellor of the University of Rangoon. He quoted the memorable address delivered by the Earl of Rosebery as Chancellor of the University of Glasgow. "We do not take much or even ask much from the State. But the State invites us every day to lean upon it. I seem to hear the wheedling and alluring whisper...'Sound you maybe, we bid you to be a cripple. Do you see? Be blind. Do you hear? Be deaf. Do you walk? Be not so venturesome. Here is a crutch for one arm. When you get accustomed to it you will soon want another...the sooner the better'... The lesson of our teaching was...

level up. The cry of modern civilization is...level down, let the Government have a finger in every pie, probing, popping and disturbing". "If opinion of this character," said Austosh, "could be deliberately maintained in the very home of freedom, by one who had occupied the highest place attainable in the British Empire, there is no reason for surprise that we in this land should feel timid of the bearers of gifts from the public treasury... The custodians of the public funds... may seek, as indeed they did in our case, to annex unacceptable conditions... Conditions of this description, whenever imposed, in whatever form or shape, must be stoutly resisted by a University, anxious to realize that full measure of autonomy which when attained, would be its priceless possession... We stand unreservedly by the doctrine that if education is to be our policy as a nation, it must not be our politics, freedom is its very life blood, condition of its growth, the secret of its success". The words with which he addressed the graduates before concluding his last Convocation speech will continue to stir the souls of generations. He said, "...In whatever sphere your lot may be cast, whatever your hopes and fears, turn back to your *Alma Mater* with filial piety and attachment. Councils will come and go; ministries will blossom and perish; parties will develop and disappear or change their nature and survive. But your University, my University will live for ever, if her children by thousands and ten thousands stand by her with steadfast loyalty and devotion, alike in her days of triumph and affliction. Unalterable is my faith as to her bright future, because I feel she must be a national organization, self-reliant though bound in

service to the nation, adapting herself to the manifold and varying wants of the community, from generation to generation".

On returning home after the Convocation, he found a letter from Lord Lytton waiting for him. Lord Lytton wanted an assurance from Asutosh that he would give up his attitude of opposition to the Government and give his wholehearted co-operation. If he did so, he would see to his reappointment as Vice-Chancellor for another term. Lord Lytton said, "I am anxious to retain your services in this post because I feel that your powers and your attainments are of great value to the University and to the cause of higher education in Bengal. But if those powers and attainments are used in opposition to the Government in the belief that you are thus serving the interests of the University, your continued occupation of the post would be impossible". He then charged Asutosh with having misrepresented the objects and motives of Government and of having inspired articles in the Press to discredit the Government. "You have appealed to Sir Michael Sadler, to the Government of India, and the Government of Assam to oppose our bill. All this has been the action not of a fellow worker anxious to improve the conditions of co-operation between the Government and the University, but of an opponent to the maintenance of any connection between the two... I invite you at this time when the Vice-Chancellor's office must be filled anew...to assure me that you will exchange an attitude of opposition for one of wholehearted assistance".

This letter was, to say the least, ill conceived. It shows that Lytton had a very poor comprehension of

Asutosh's character. Otherwise, we fail to understand, how he could have thought of bullying him into submission or purchasing his support by the offer of Vice-Chancellorship. Within two days Asutosh sent a fitting reply to Lytton. As regards the charge that he had appealed to Sir Michael Sadler, the Government of India, and the Government of Assam to oppose the Government bills, Asutosh said, "I had decided to give an opportunity to every member of the Senate to discuss the provisions of the bill. The Senate, it may be known to you, includes His Excellency the Governor of Assam, the member of the Council of the Governor-General in-charge of the department of education, the Minister for Education in Assam and the Director of Public Instruction, Assam. The papers were forwarded as confidential documents to each of these gentlemen. If I had withheld the papers from them, they would have been entitled to make legitimate grievance against me. If the result has been that they have formed an unfavourable opinion of the measure devised by your Government, and have taken such steps as they consider necessary and proper, you may regret it, but surely that is not a ground for complaint against me". He had informed Sir Michael Sadler that, notwithstanding his advice and the advice of the Senate, the Government had rejected the recommendations of the Commission over which he had presided, a fact which was of common knowledge among the public. This was in the best interests of the University and the country. As regards the charge that he had inspired articles in the Press to discredit Government, Asutosh protested, "This is a libel and I challenge you to produce evidence

in support of this unfounded allegation". He accepted the charge that his criticisms had been destructive rather than constructive. "Yes, the criticisms have been destructive of the provisions of the bills, which appeared to me and to my colleagues, on the Senate to be most objectionable, framed, as we did not hesitate to record, from a political and not an educational standpoint". He contested the charge that he had given no help to the Chancellor. "I maintain that I have constantly offered you my help and advice which, for reasons best known to you alone, you have not accepted. I have written to you letter after letter, even in the midst of terrible sorrows, commenting in detail on the provisions of the bills. You have never cared to reply to the criticisms thus expressed... Again the report of the Committee on the two bills minutely criticised their clauses... You have never recorded your opinion on our views. You have not even given me the opportunity to discuss the report with you". He then rejected Lytton's insulting offer to appoint him Vice-Chancellor for another term provided 'he behaved'. "There are expressions in your letter", he continued, "which imply that I am an applicant for the post and that I am in expectation of the reappointment. Let me assure you that if you and your ministers are under such an impression, you are entirely mistaken. You ask me to give you a pledge that I shall exchange an attitude of opposition for one of wholehearted assistance. You are apparently not acquainted with the traditions of the high office which I have held for ten years... Many of the occupants... have been men who had taken oath to administer justice in the name of their sovereign. To them it would have been a matter of

astonishment to be told that, as Vice-Chancellors, they were expected to adapt themselves to the views of the Government, simply because it was the Government which had the appointment in its gift. I have, I maintain, scrupulously adhered to the cherished tradition of my office and it has never entered into my mind during the last two years that I was simply expected to adapt myself to the wishes of your Government". He then concluded, "I send you without hesitation the only answer which an honourable man can send, an answer which you and your advisers expect and desire. I decline the insulting offer you have made to me".

The Government appointed Bhupendranath Basu to succeed Asutosh in the office of Vice-Chancellor of the University. Addressing the first meeting of the Senate over which he presided, the new Vice-Chancellor paid a glowing tribute to Asutosh. He said, "You, sir, have built for us a temple, which, whatever may be the fault in its execution, is grand in design and conception, and which will for ever command the respect and admiration of our country and of succeeding ages. You have devoted to it industry, ability, genius and above all, a love for the youth of our country, which none can excel and few can emulate...I have to fellow in your footsteps in the task which I have undertaken".

VII. THE LAST DAYS

Though Asutosh was no longer the Vice-Chancellor, he continued to exercise the same influence as before over University affairs as a member of the Senate and the Syndicate and as President of the Post-graduate Council in Arts and Science. The strain on his mind and body that the University work had involved during the last few months had told on his health, especially as it had to be carried on in the midst of terrible personal sorrows. He lost his eldest daughter, Kamala in January 1923. His deepest affection was concentrated on this unfortunate girl and her death undermined Asutosh's health for good. "She was the light of the house and of all who came within the sphere of her influence," he said. In her memory Asutosh made a gift of Rs. 40,000 to the University for the establishment of a lectureship to be called the Kamala Lectureship. The lecturer was to deliver not more than three lectures, either in Bengali or in English, on some aspect of Indian life and thought. The first Kamala Lecturer was Annie Besant. Other great Indian personages who have since been appointed Kamala Lecturer include Srinivasa Sastri, Sarojini Naidu, Rabindranath Tagore, Abul Kalam Azad and Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan.

Many were the speculations at the time as to what Asutosh would do next to save the University. The obvious course for him was to retire from the Bench and contest the coming elections in alliance with C.R. Das and capture the Government. These rumours

alarmed the Government, and Government officials began to discuss confidentially whether they could apply the Government Servant's Conduct Rules against Asutosh. They were, however, not able to proceed because whatever evidence they had could be described only as hearsay.

On August 4, 1923 Asutosh addressed the inauguration ceremony of the department of Legal Studies in the Benaras Hindu University.

Asutosh retired from the Bench with effect from January 2, 1924 on grounds of health, six months before the due date. He had served the High Court as judge for twenty years and had been the Chief Justice for some time in 1920. The high tributes were paid to him on the occasion of his farewell.

On January 7, 1924 Asutosh addressed the Convocation of the Lucknow University. His subject was "The University and the Nation'. The authorities of the Lucknow University Union utilized the presence of Sir Asutosh at Lucknow in connection with the University Convocation to arrange a debate in the Bennett Hall, Canning College building, and invited Sir Asutosh to join the debate. The subject was, "That in the opinion of this House the Ministers and the Councils are justified in exercising control over the administration of the University".

On this occasion Asutosh said, "The State must discharge its manifold functions through bodies properly constituted. The duty of the State with regard to higher education is performed through the medium of the Universities as the appropriate organs created for the special purpose. Once you have framed a constitution

for a University, leave it free. If you find that the constitution has failed, let the legislature interfere and alter the constitution. But it is a contradiction in terms that you have a University, entrusted by the State with the discharge of the very responsible duty of promotion of higher education, and yet you contemplate interference on every possible and impossible occasion. That position is intolerable and in the light of conditions, educational and political, here and elsewhere, I confidently ask you to reject the motion and to make an insistent demand for autonomous self-governing Universities, in intimate touch with the life of the nation and yet free from external control—free from political fetters from the State, free from ecclesiastical fetters, from religious corporations, free from civic fetters from the community. Thus alone can the Nation, under the vitalizing influence of a creative, and independent centre of thought; work out its moral as well as intellectual salvation, in touch alike with the experience of the past and the aspirations of the future".

Asutosh resumed practice as an advocate at the High Court, Calcutta, and shortly after accepted the leading brief in the case of the Raja of Dumraon *vs.* Hariprasad which was then before the Patna High Court. This matter involved considerable strain on an already overworked frame. In spite of that, he used to come to Calcutta every week-end and attend to the work of the University far into Saturday nights and on Sundays. Over and above this he was greatly anxious about the condition of his youngest son who was lying seriously ill at the time in Calcutta.

The end of this great man came suddenly. It was

like a bolt from the blue. After a brief illness lasting for three days only he expired on the afternoon of the May 25, 1924. On the May 17, he had been invited to dinner at his house by the Chauffeur of his car. It speaks of his greatness that he could not refuse the invitation of even so humble a person.

On the 23rd morning he was quite hale and hearty and took his usual morning walk. On return home he had a number of motions and then complained of a burning sensation all over his body. Fever set in and the temperature began to rise rapidly. The burning sensation increased and there was severe pain. Various complications followed. Asutosh's eldest son Sri Rama Prasad Mukherjee, sent frantic telegrams from Patna to Calcutta for doctors. Dr. P. Nandi, a well-known Calcutta physician, arrived at Patna on the morning of May 24. From the morning of May 25, he was unconscious, and in the afternoon he died. Asutosh's second son Sri Syama Prasad Mukherjee, was at Simla with the famous physician, Sir Nilratan Sircar, and Dr. C. V. Raman, attending a conference. They reached Patna an hour after his death. The disease remained undiagnosed. This was indeed a tragic end. People in Calcutta were stunned by the news. When the body was brought by a special train to Howrah Station next morning, thousands of citizens of Calcutta, high and low, gathered to pay their homage to this great son of Bengal. Amidst sorrowful scenes the mortal remains of Asutosh were consigned to the fire at the Keoratala cremation ground on the bank of the Adi Ganga.

For twenty years Sir Asutosh had been the University and the University Sir Asutosh. The vacuum, so

suddently created, cast a deep gloom over the University. On the May 31, 1924, the Syndicate met at a special meeting and passed the following resolution :

"We, the members of the Syndicate, in a special meeting convened for the purpose, place on record an expression of our profound grief at the death of our revered colleague, Sir Asutosh Mookerjee. As Vice-Chancellor or as an ordinary member of the Syndicate he had been intimately associated with its work since 1889. For thirtyfive years he placed his outstanding intellectual powers and his unrivalled energy at the service of his colleagues, thereby enabling them to carry out a task which year by year became more difficult, laborious and exacting. The remarkable developments in the work of the University during the last two decades which it was our privilege as the representatives of the Senate to direct, were largely the product not only of his constructive genius but of the selfless, incessant and devoted toil, which he brought to task as a member of our body. The personal and private sorrow which we each individually feel at the loss of our distinguished colleague is intensified by our keen sense of the irreparable injury to our work which will be caused by the absence of his indefatigable energy, his directive skill and his unique knowledge and experience. In paying our sorrowful tribute of respect to the friend, colleague, and leader whom we have lost, and in placing on record our profound admiration for the services rendered to the cause of education by the work which he accomplished as a member of our body, we express the hope that the memory of his devoted labours may inspire

those of us who remain, and those who follow us, to imitate his great example, and dedicate all the powers which they possess to the service of their University and to the achievement of that object for which he lived, the advancement of learning amongst the people of his mother land".

Lord Lytton, obviously moved by the tragedy, came down from Darjeeling to preside over a memorial meeting of the Senate as Chancellor. "With bowed head and heavy heart", he said, "We have come to mourn the loss of our University's greatest son". He continued, "Sir Asutosh Mookerjee was the most striking and representative Bengali of his time. The versatility of his intellect and the variety of his interests were so great that there is scarcely any department of the public life of this province which has not been left the poorer by his death. But in this place and in the presence of those who were his colleagues and fellow workers, I would recall to you not the brilliant lawyer, not the learned judge, nor the many-sided scholar, nor the patron and administrator of countless learned societies, but rather the man who in the interests of this University and in furtherance of that object for which it stands, the advancement of learning, devoted to the cause of education through a period of 35 years—those hours which other men less intellectually gifted or possessed of less indefatigable energy reserve for recreation or repose. The University of Calcutta, as it stands today, bears the indelible impress of those 35 years of devoted labour...The development of the University as a home of advanced learning and as a

teaching organisation was the main achievement of his life...The post-graduate department of this University was the outstanding product of Sir Asutosh's great career".

Referring to the differences which he had with Asutosh, Lytton said, "In the last year he and I have been spoken of as antagonists, but there was no fundamental difference of principle between us to justify an antagonism...Even if there had been more reality then I am prepared to admit in the issues which seemed temporarily to divide us, all controversy would be silenced in the presence of death. Today we can think only of the great intellectual powers which he placed so long at the service of his University, of the years of unremitting toil which he cheerfully spent in the task of organising and administering its higher branches, and of the known, not only in India, but in Europe, which he thereby gained for Calcutta...who in the eyes of his countrymen and in the eyes of the world, represented the University so completely that for many years Sir Asutosh was in fact the University and the University Sir Asutosh". Lytton continued, "Let us unite in the common determination to work together for those changes which are inevitable if our University is to keep its fair name before the world. Let the foundation stone of that temple of reconciliation be a joint and common purpose to receive the teaching University of Calcutta as a sacred trust from his dying hands, and in the years to come, whatever changes may be found essential in the general organisation of the University to allow nothing to threaten its stability, its prosperity, its freedom, or its future development".

Asutosh died at a turning point in his life. Now that he had retired from Government service, he was free to take part in political life. There is no doubt that he would have continued to serve the cause of education even in this new phase of his career. An apathetic government had starved the University and obstructed him in the fulfilment of his mission. It would be correct, therefore, to guess that he would have stood for election to the Legislature and secured the education portfolio, so that the streams of finance could be channelled to the cause of education and he could work uninterrupted for the progress of education in the province in all its stages. Time, alas! was not allowed to him to do so and we are left to contemplate what might have been.

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VIII. ASUTOSH AND LEARNED SOCIETIES OF BENGAL

ASUTOSH'S GREAT DESIRE to push India to the foremost place in the world for research led him to associate himself with all the learned societies of the province.

He was associated with the Asiatic Society of Bengal, the Indian Association for the Cultivation of Science, the Indian Museum, the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, the Bengal Sanskrit Association, the Imperial Library, now know as the National Library, and the Mahabodhi Society. These Institutions had well established traditions of research and contained valuable research materials, factors which Asutosh sought to utilise for the encouragement of research and of popular knowledge.

Asutosh became a member of the Asiatic Society in 1886. By that time his original papers in Mathematics had already appeared in European journals and his mathematical genius had been recognised in the West. Between 1888 and 1890 he contributed not less than a dozen valuable papers on his investigations in Mathematics to the Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. He was Vice-President of the Society from 1906 to 1915 and President from 1921 to 1923 and as such made it his business to encourage young scholars engaged in research and point out to them new lines on which they could undertake investigations.

More than once in his annual address to the Society he stressed the importance of Tibetan studies. In his address in 1906 he said, "... The most profitable course

which a serious student of Indian antiquities may pursue is to take himself to the study of Tibetan, and a minute examination of the manuscripts at our disposal, beginning with those which were brought nearly eight years ago by Mr. Hodgson, while Resident at Nepal, and ending with those which were brought last year by the Tibetan mission. In the same address he asked the members of the Society to pay greater attention to the Mahomedan period of Indian history. He observed that "the problems in oriental scholarship, both literary and scientific, which still await solution are so numerous and so fascinating that I cannot conceive any adequate reason why our Society would ever languish". In his annual address of 1908, Asutosh encouraged the newly formed medical section of the Society to direct their energies to an investigation of the history of Indian Medicine.

In his annual address of 1910 he dwelt on the importance of the Bardic chronicles of Rajputana and of making satisfactory arrangements for their collection for preparation of a history of the Rajput states. "It is beyond dispute", he said, "that many of the chronicles have from time to time been reduced to writing, but many more still exist only in the form of ballads and songs, in the memory of professional and hereditary bards scattered throughout the various Rajput states. What is required therefore is not merely to collect manuscripts ...of the chronicles, but to take down and to reduce to writing the ballads handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation.... If therefore we are to undertake a complete collection of the Bardic chronicles of Rajputana, we must have a systematic organisation for reducing to writing the ballads as they are recited by the

bards, and obviously this can be accomplished successfully only with the active co-operation of the Rajput chiefs themselves".

In his address for the year 1913 Asutosh regretted that "progress in the pursuit of Tibetan studies has not been particularly creditable since the days of our illustrious member Csoma de Koros". He again pointed out the need of research in the Bardic chronicles of Rajputana. Asutosh utilised his annual speech of 1915 to goad Indian scholars not to fall behind scholars of other countries in the pursuit of Tibetan studies, to stress the importance of the Bardic chronicles of Rajputana and to point out the importance of investigations into the principles of Islamic jurisprudence, a subject to which contributions of the members of the Society and of persons outside the Society had been meagre.

In his speech of 1922 he pointed out the wealth of materials available for research in the history of Greater India. He also stressed the importance of preparing a comprehensive history of India which will not be a mere chronicle of political events but will at the same time comprehend important developments in the religious, economic and social life of the country. He expressed the hope that some scholars will undertake to write the history of India "which though not exhaustive is yet a history in the modern scientific term" and wished that "a teacher connected with an Indian University, shall we say the Calcutta University, may enable us to realise our cherished dream".

Asutosh was a good Sanskrit scholar and he edited *Jimutvāhanas Vyavahāra mtārika* in the Memoirs of the Asiatic Society.

In May 1905 Asutosh joined the Board of Trustees of the Indian Museum as a nominee of the Asiatic Society. In August 1909, he became the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Museum and continued as such till the day of his death. Asutosh made significant contributions to the development of the Museum. He lent his help and support to the enactment of the Indian Museum Bill of 1910. Under this bill the Indian Museum obtained greater scope of work and considerable autonomy in respect of scientific research and loan of exhibits. This Act also enabled the Museum to undertake activities in the direction of popular education.

Under the stewardship of Asutosh, the Art Gallery of the Government of West Bengal was amalgamated to the Art Lare Court of the Indian Museum to form the Art Section of the Indian Museum which was placed under the direct control of the Board of Trustees. The Indian Museum building was expanded along the Chowringhee Road to accommodate three new galleries, one each for Art, Painting and Pre-historic Archaeology.

On November 28, 1913, the Indian Museum completed its first one hundred years of existence. Asutosh presided over the inaugural ceremony of the first centenary celebrations. He delivered an inspiring address in course of which he indicated what a national museum should be. He said, "It is now generally recognised that a museum is an institution for the preservation of those objects which best illustrate the phenomena of Nature and the works of man, for the utilisation of these in the increase of knowledge, and for the culture and enlightenment of the people. A National or Imperial Museum must, consequently, be equipped adequately for the fulfilment

of three principal functions, viz. first, for the accumulation and preservation of specimens such as form the material basis of knowledge in the Arts and Sciences; secondly for the elucidation and investigation of the specimens so collected and for the diffusion of the knowledge acquired thereby; and thirdly to make suitable arrangements calculated to arouse the interest of the public and to promote their instruction".

At his instance and under his guidance, a comprehensive history of the Indian Museum was written and published in 1914.

The anthropological collection of the museum was at first an adjunct of the Zoological Survey of India. Asutosh brought this under the direct control of the Board of Trustees. Thus came into existence the Ethnographical Gallery which has grown into the Anthropological Section of the Museum.

Asutosh also reorganised and rearranged the Natural History Section and the sections on Art and Archaeology Asutosh left behind him, "a Museum which by the richness of its collection and by the high standard of its scientific work" had reached the status of a national cultural and educational institution, the only one of its kind then in India.

Asutosh's connection with the Indian Association for the cultivation of science began when he was only 23 years old. At the invitation of Dr. Mahendra Lal Sircar he started to deliver lectures at the Association on Mathematics in an honorary capacity and continued to do so until 1891 when his professional work made it difficult for him to continue. In 1910 he became a life member of the Association by subscribing Rs. 2,000 to

its funds, and in the following year he was elected a member of the Executive Committee.

The session of 1903-1904 of the Association was opened by Asutosh with an interesting introductory lecture on 'Relations of Mathematics to the Experimental Sciences.'

In 1908 he was elected a Vice-President of the Association to fill up the vacancy caused by the death of Maharaja J. M. Tagore. He presided over the four Science Conventions held in Calcutta under the auspices of the Association. In 1923 Asutosh became President of the Association in place of Raja Peary Mohan Mukherjee, deceased, and continued to function as such till his death.

Asutosh presided over the first session of the Indian Science Congress held in 1914.

We have already seen that, even in his college days, Asutosh had contributed important Mathematical papers to well-known journals in India and abroad and that such contribution had received appreciation from reputed mathematicians. If Asutosh had been able to devote himself entirely to his favourite subject, Mathematics, he would have become a world famous mathematician. In 1908 Asutosh founded the Calcutta Mathematical Society and as President guided the affairs of the Society till his death. Eightythree meetings of the Society were held during Asutosh's life time, and he presided at every meeting. A number of foreign mathematicians were made honorary members of the Society. In 1909 Prof. Ganesh Prasad, in 1913 Prof. Forsyth and in 1915 Prof. Young spoke on their researches to the Society. Lectures by other eminent mathematicians like Prof. Cultis,

S. N. Bose, N. R. Sen, B. M. Sen, B. B. Dutta and other followed. Under Asutosh's encouragement and inspiration a number of brilliant young men engaged themselves in mathematical research and contributed to the the bulletin of the Society.[1]

Asutosh guided the affairs of the Imperial Library, now National Library, for a long time. He was a member of the Council of the Imperial Library. From 1910 till his death, he was President of the Council.

Asutosh was deeply interested in propagating the study of Bengali language and literature, and in the encouragement of research in the subject. By his efforts Bengali had been included, along with other Indian vernaculars, as a subject of study for the highest examination of the University of Calcutta. Asutosh was for many years connected with the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad and was Vice-President of that body from 1904 to 1908. In 1915 Asutosh addressed the North Bengal Literary Conference as its Chairman. He was President of the Bankipore Session of the Bengali Literary Conference in 1916. At all these conferences he dwelt on the importance of the study of Bengali literature and spoke in eloquent terms about the glorious future of the Bengali language.

Asutosh, himself a good Sanskrit scholar, was anxious to encourage the study of Sanskrit in the country, and to revive the old glory of Nabadwip as a centre of Sanskrit learning. He was President of the Association of the Pandits of Nabadwip who conferred upon him the title of *Saraswati*. The pandits of Dacca

[1] N. K. Sinha—Asutosh Mukherjee—pp. 177-179.

conferred upon him the title of *Sāstravachaspati*. He was President of the Bengal Sanskrit Association from 1908 to 1923, and as such he could exercise his stimulating influence over the pandits and over Sanskrit was teaching in Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Assam. Asutosh also President of the governing body of the Sanskrit College, Calcutta.

Asutosh realised the importance of the study of Buddhist Philosophy and literature in the Calcutta University. For this purpose he started classes in Pali in the University in 1907. Thus, Calcutta University was the first University in India to take up the teaching of Pali. In recognition of his services to Pali and to the study of Buddhistic literature, the monks of Ceylon conferred on Asutosh in 1914 the title of *Sambuddhāgama Chakravarti*. In 1916 Asutosh accepted the Presidentship of the Mahabodhi Society which position he held till his death. In 1920 Asutosh as President of the Mahabodhi Society received from Lord Ronaldshay, on behalf of the Society, a casket containing relics of the Lord Buddha. The ceremony was held at Government House, Calcutta, and Asutosh received the relics in a *dhoti* and bare-footed.

Thus it will be no exaggeration to say that Asutosh stood like a colossus astride the entire cultural field of Bengal.

IX. ASUTOSH AS A MAN

ASUTOSH IS REGARDED as a giant on account of his towering personality, his untiring capacity for hard work, his immense energy, his superior intellect, his uncanny memory and his vast learning. Physically however he was no giant. He was of medium height, stout and stocky, and of dark complexion. But he had some distinguishing features which made his presence known in a big assembly. Set under thick eyebrows were a pair of shining eyes. The penetrating look of those eyes was such as made you feel that he had sized you up immediately he saw you. These eyes emitted fire when he was in a rage and the kindliest of look when he was pleased. On a round face and under a medium size nose, his drooping moustache covered his both lips. His appearance gave the impression of a physically strong man. But he was not immune from illness. In his student days he was sickly and had serious attacks of illness. His deep passion for work led him to ignore all necessity for rest.

Asutosh never donned European dress. He was seen everywhere in a buttoned up coat, *dhoti* and shoes. In the High Court he wore trousers while he sat on the bench, but discarded them immediately on coming back to his chamber. One could see him coming down the special stairs for judges in the High Court after the day's work was over, clad in a *dhoti*. When he was a student, it was the practice among the 'bhadralok' class to wear a *chaddar*. Asutosh discarded the *chaddar* when

he was quite young, undaunted by the jeers of his fellow students. His *chaddar* had got entangled in his coach as he was alighting from it and he had stumbled down. After this he gave up the *chaddar*. Later in life he used a *chaddar* keeping it folded and resting on his left shoulder.

An orthodox Brahmin, his habits were simple. He led an austere life. He disliked soft bed and slept on a hard one. On one occasion when he was the guest of a rich man he could not sleep on the luxurious bed and made a bed for himself on the floor. He never smoked or chewed '*pan*'. He never took tea. He was a vegetarian. Once after a serious illness he had to take fish at the instance of his medical adviser, but he never liked it. He was very fond of *Sandesh* and took a good amount of this variety of sweet daily. As a matter of fact the name of Sir Asutosh was associated in his days with *Sandesh* prepared at the confectionery of Bhim Nag in Bowbazar, Calcutta.

Asutosh led a regular life. He left bed every morning at 4 A. M. By half past four he was at his work. After working for some time he went out daily for his morning walk in the Calcutta *maidan*. His father had taught him the importance of the morning air for health and in student days father and son used to go out for a walk in the morning. This habit continued up to the last days of his life. Asutosh used to take his morning walk along the path in the *maidan* parallel to Chowringhee Road from what is now the Queen's Way end up to Park Street. This path remains today as a historic place, because this is where important people met him to discuss with him many important matters of the day and less important people to place their grievances.

On his return home he would give some time to visitors waiting for him and then start work. He usually had three stenographers at his service and simultaneously dictated to them judgments, reports, notes and replies to his numerous correspondence. After finishing his work he would come back to his sitting room and give audience to all callers different stations in life who would come in without any restriction. It was time for him now to have his bath and his servants would come in to apply oil on his head and body while he talked to his visitors. He had no hesitation in receiving even European officials in this state.

He would go at the end of the day straight from the High Court to the University often with sweets from Bhim Nag for the teachers of the University, waiting for his arrival, in the Teacher's Common Room. He used to return home late in the evening after the meetings in the University were over, take his dinner and then work till he went to bed at 10 P. M. This was the time which he usually employed for his private study. Thus from four in the morning till ten O'clock at night every moment of his life was occupied with work.

Asutosh had deep regard for his heritage and scrupulously discarded western ways. At the same time his mind was receptive to the best in western culture. He would not give up the traditions of his motherland, but at the same time he would not tolerate the evil practices which had crept into Hindu society in the name of religion. He was not afraid to displease the orthodox section of Hindu society if necessary. He felt keenly for his eldest daughter, who was a child widow, and gave her in marriage for the second time in the face of strong oppo-

sition from orthodox Brahmins. Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar had shown that the marriage of childless Hindu widows had been sanctioned in the ancient Hindu religious texts and that the remarriage of Hindu widows was legal. But this had not been accepted by the orthodox section of society. Vidyasagar set an example by arranging the marriage of a widow with his son. Asutosh, who was a sincere admirer of Vidyasagar, followed his example fearlessly in the face of the sternest opposition.

His refusal to adopt western ways and dress was an expression of his nationalism. He wanted to set an example to his countrymen, to inculcate a spirit of independence among them and to teach them to regard themselves as equal to the white man. He was as good a patriot as any political leader. Addressing the youth of his country at the University Convocation of 1907, he said, "though steeped in the customs of the West, disregard not all that is sublime in Indian thought and all that is best in Indian manners and customs. Neglect not in the glare of western light, the priceless treasures which are your inheritance. In your just admiration for all that is best in the culture of the West, do not under any circumstances, denationalise yourselves. Do not hesitate to own at all times that you are genuine Indians, and do not fail to rise above the petty vanities of dress and taste. Above all sedulously cultivate your vernaculars, for it is through the medium of the vernaculars alone, that you can hope to reach the masses of your countrymen and communicate to them the treasures you gather from the field of European learning". One example of his spirit of independence is provided by the following incident. He was invited by Lord Curzon

to go to London as a representative of Calcutta to attend the Coronation of Edward VII. This was undoubtedly a great honour. Asutosh told him that he could not go as his mother would not allow him. Lord Curzon is reported to have asked him to tell his mother that he will have to go under orders of the representative of the sovereign in India. To this Asutosh said that his mother would reply that nobody except herself had the right to issue orders to her son.

In those days many Europeans behaved in an arrogant manner with Indians. There were frequent occasions for friction between Europeans and Indians while travelling on the railways, and it was usual for the Europeans to have the advantage. There was an occasion for Asutosh to teach a lesson to a British military officer on one of his railway journeys. Asutosh was then a member of the Sadler Commission. He had gone to Aligarh in connection with his work as member of the Commission. During his return journey from Aligarh he had a British military officer as a fellow-passenger in his compartment. Asutosh had dozed off to sleep when the military officer threw his newly purchased 'nagri' slippers out of the window. When Asutosh woke up to find that his slippers were gone, he guessed rightly what had happened and flung the military officer's coat out of the window. At that time the army man was sleeping. He set up a row when he woke up to find that his coat was missing. Asutosh cooly told him that his coat had gone to fetch the slippers.

Asutosh had a very soft heart and was the court of appeal for all who were in difficulty. He was easily approachable and every day he saw, without intro-

duction, many people, high and low, from different walks of life, heard their prayers and did all that was possible for him to do.

He quickly discerned merit and always encouraged the meritorious. He kept a watch on the career of brilliant students, quite unknown to them. Many such students got the surprise of their lives when they first met him and found that Asutosh knew the details of their academic career by heart. Such young men were picked up by Asutosh for the staff of the post-graduate departments of his University. The constant encouragement which they received from Asutosh led them to blossom out as scholars of international repute. The great personal influence which he wielded on the teaching and non-teaching staff of the University was purely due to the affectionate treatment which they received from him.

Asutosh was a practical man. But at the same time he was a dreamer. He was seen on occasions to lapse into silence and his eyes to acquire a distant look. Obviously he dreamt about his dear University becoming the queen of the Universities of the world, where scholars from all over the world would meet in the common pursuit of advancing the bounds of human knowledge—a modern Nalanda. Addressing the Convocation of the University in 1914, he said, "Plans and schemes to heighten the efficiency of the University have been the subject of my day-dreams into which even a busy man lapses from time to time; they have haunted me in the hours of nightly rest". Of Asutosh, I.J.S. Taraporewala wrote, "His imagination was of a quality which is rarely found with such great practical ability. When he started talking about his beloved India

and what she was and what she would be in future, his words had all the fire of those of a poet and a prophet. Never for a moment did he doubt that India was to be great in the near future. He dared to dream dreams of her greatness such as few have done. He dreamt those dreams even while broad awake. Every breath of his body was inspired by this dream, every act of his was calculated—deliberately calculated—to bring these dreams down into the material world of our everyday life".

Asutosh believed that man could do little by himself and that the affairs of the world were determined by providence. On one occasion when a friend was seriously ill and was hovering between life and death and the doctors had declared that the end was near, he said "What do the doctors know or what can they do? Everything is in the hands of God". It is this faith that, whatever providence wills shall happen, that sustained him in the great struggle which he had to go through to make the University of Calcutta conform to the highest ideal of a University. In his speech before the Senate of the Calcutta University on the December 8, 1922 when the University was faced with a crisis, he said "Do not my friends believe for a moment that there is no providence. If Science or Philosophy has taught you that, get rid of the blunder. If it is the design of providence that high education should disappear from Bengal, let His will be carried out. But I have an unalterable faith in providence; that has been my one, sole inspiration in moments of trials and tribulations".

Asutosh had to face much opposition to his work in the University. His detractors called him egoistic and dictatorial. This is not correct. He encouraged

independent thinking in others and was always ready to listen to sound arguments. But for people with foolish arguments he had no patience, and invariably such people would be snubbed. Bhupendranath Basu, who succeeded Asutosh as Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University in 1923 after Asutosh had rejected Lytton's humiliating offer of reappointment, described Asutosh as a "generous antagonist and a devoted friend". He said, "I approached my office with a great deal of trepidation, but I soon found that Sir Asutosh could be easily persuaded to take a view of things which, though not within the lines of his perspective, was still a view which others might consider favourably". A similar view was expressed by Lord Carmichael when he said that Asutosh "is open to conviction, even if he be hard to convince".

The criticisms against his policy which appeared in a section of the Press at the time were born of ignorance of what a University meant and of failure to realize what Asutosh was doing. Asutosh usually treated such criticism with silent contempt. To Asutosh his objective was clear. He knew that he was building a better and a greater India. It was therefore natural for him to ride rough over all opposition by the help of his superior knowledge and the power of forceful arguments.

We can do no better than quote here Sir Michael Sadler's testimony to Sir Asutosh after his death. He wrote, "In Sir Asutosh Mookerjee India has lost one of her greatest sons : the world one of its commanding personalities. He was mighty in battle. He could have ruled an empire. But he gave the best of his powers to education, because he believed that in education rightly

interpreted lies the secret of human welfare and the key to every empire's moral strength....He had a passion for freedom. But he feared and hated anarchy.

"He was the spiritual heir of Mr. Gokhale, another guide of young men and servant of education. But the man whom he more truly resembled, as well in physical vigour as in moral courage, was the American patriot, Booker Washington.

"Sir Asutosh was called the 'Bengal Tiger'. This was a misnomer. If he is to be compared to one of the noble animals, it is to the British bull-dog. Certainly he had the bull-dog's fidelity to his friends, the bull-dog's sensitiveness of feeling and iron tenacity of will.

"He had a strong sense of humour and a memorable laugh...his readiness to follow every point in an argument sprang from his power of swift apprehension. He was brave and independent in mind. He truckled to no man.

"In Sir Asutosh Hindu tradition and western culture were combined. The foundation of his character was religious and not political. His tenderness for home, his veneration for his mother's memory, his family affection sprang from the depth of his nature and from inner piety. Himself a devout Hindu, he respected the convictions and the worship of men and women of other faiths. He was a man of accessibility and also a man at arms".[1]

[1] Calcutta Review, July, 1924.

X. A BIBLIOPHILE

No account of Sir Asutosh Mukherjee can be complete without a reference to his great collection of books. His library consisting of nearly seventytwo thousand volumes has been presented by his sons to the National Library, Calcutta, and is now the property of the Nation. Asutosh's father, Dr. Gangaprasad Mukherjee, was a man of many-sided interests and had collected a library. Asutosh from his infancy was brought up in the midst of books. From his school days Asutosh's thirst for knowledge led him devote himself to books. He was encouraged by his father who spared no pain to provide him the food that he required for his mind. Since the chief interest of Asutosh was in Mathematics, Dr. Gangaprasad purchased for him a fine collection of books and periodicals on Mathematics. From his student days, Asutosh began to add to the nucleus of the library provided by his father, with own money. Every rupee of his scholarship was spent on the purchase of books and, as he obtained scholarships throughout his student life, the total amount was not insignificant. Later in life he spent a large portion of his earning on the purchase of books.

Most of the books in his library are rare and out of print. These rare books were obtained from old book shops in Calcutta and sales of private collections and from publishers and book-sellers in Europe and America with whom Asutosh had placed standing orders.

Asutosh had a special love for limited editions of books of which there are nearly one thousand in his collection. Most of these books relate to European literature. It was a common practice for publishers in the last century and in the early part of the present century to print limited editions of books for subscribers. Only a limited number of copies were printed and the types 'distributed' immediately afterwards. These were usually expensive as they were printed on hand-made paper and on material like vellum. Many of them were illustrated and decorated by hand. Only a few of such books collected by Asutosh can be mentioned here. Robert Browning's, 'The Flight of the Duchess' was published in 1905. Only 125 copies, all on vellum, were printed and Asutosh's copy is No. 15. Gauties's 'King Candaules' (1898), Flaubert's 'Simple Heart' (1898) and a copy of the famous story of 'Daphnis and Cloe' of Longus (1898) in Asutosh's library are each No. 13 of the choice editions and bear the remark 'Printed for the Hon'ble Dr. Asutosh Mukhopadhyay'. Other such unique books in the collection are 'The English Bible' of the Dover Press, described as 'one of the noblest printed books ever made', the book of Common Prayer printed on hand-made paper and bound with 'oak' covers with a leather spine and clasps to hold both sides of its covers, an illustrated edition of Goethe's Faust (1874) in original German, remarkable for its binding and decorations, a set of eight volumes of the works of William Shakespeare (1893) containing 1243 engravings and two big volumes of the American editions of Boydell's 'Illustrations of the Dramatic Work of Shakespeare' (1852) containing engravings of pictures by

eminent English artists. Well-bound editions of the individual plays of Shakespeare, specially illustrated and printed in limited editions, are also in the collections. The facsimile of the 'First Folio' of Shakespeare's plays was brought out with Sydney Lee's introduction in 1902. This was a limited edition of 1,000 copies. Asutosh's copy is No. 421. The first edition of Milton's 'Paradise Lost' published in 1688, the edition of Milton's poetical works published in 1794-97 (3 Volumes) the library edition of John Ruskin in thirtynine volumes and the Oxford edition of Samuel Johnson's works (1825) in eleven volumes are in his library.

Books rare from the point of view of their date of publication include 'Aesop's Fables' with illustrations and annotations, first edition, 1668; Euclid's Elements of Geometry, first translated into English by H. Billingsbey and printed (1570) by John Daye, London; Orations of Demosthenes, printed in 1599 in Greek and Latin on parallel pages; Fortescue's 'Laws of England' (1573) in English and Latin on opposite columns; first edition of Samuel Johnson's Dictionary of English Language (1755), a French dictionary by John Minshieu, Professor of Languages, London, (1599), and an account of the Mughal Court by Thomas Coriate printed in 1616.

Big sets of works of Sir Walter Scott, Daniel Defoe, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Rudyard Kipling, Robert Louis Stephenson, W.M. Thackeray, Charles & Mary Lamb and others grace his collection. The American Literature section is represented by H.W. Longfellow, E.A. Boe, Walt Whitman, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry James, R.W. Emerson and Washington Irving.

Most of the classics in other European languages can

be found in the collection. Besides Faust, Goethe's works in fourteen volumes are available. The works of Moliere, Balzac, Gautier, Flaubert and Voltaire are to be found. Asutosh seems to have had a special liking for the adventures of Don Quixote. He secured a facsimile reprint of the first edition (1605) of this famous Spanish classic, published in 1905. There are more than 20 translations in English and French of the adventures of Don Quixote in this collection. All the famous Latin and Greek authors are represented in the library. The works of Ovid, Virgil, Cicero, Levy, Tacitus, the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripedes and the comedies of Aristophanes are there. Also there are different editions of the works of Homer, the works of Thucydides, Dialogues of Plato, Metaphysics and Politics of Aristotle and Plutarch's Lives.

The Oriental classics are well represented in Asutosh's collection. The 'Sacred Books of the East' edited by Max Muller and different editions of the Ramayana are in his library. The ten-volume edition of the Ramayana by Gorressio published at the expense of Charles Albert, King of Sardinia, is magnificient. William Carey and Joshua Marshman undertook the project of editing the original Sanskrit texts of the Ramayana with a prose translation in English and explanatory notes. Only two volumes of the projected work were published and these were procured by Asutosh. The Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads and all standard works of Sanskrit literature with their commentaries are in his library. Boehtlink's Sanskrit dictionary in seven volumes and Radha Kanta Deb's 'Sabda Kalpadrum' were also purchased by Asutosh. There is a very rare edition of Kalhana's 'Rajatarangini'

(1840) which contains a French translation along with the Sanskrit text.

Asutosh collected more than 30 different editions of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. Most of these belong to limited editions illustrated and signed by the artists. There is one copy with Abanindranath Tagore's illustrations. There are also several editions of the Arabian Nights, the most important being the 'Calcutta edition' which was based on an Egyptian manuscript brought to India by Maj. Turner Macan and edited by W.H. Macnaghten. This edition in four volumes was published in 1839-42 by W. Thacker & Company, Calcutta.

Books on Education, Political Science, History and Anthropology are numerous and were in constant use by him like his books on Law. The works of Confucius, Kant, Hobbes, Voltaire and Emerson are to be found in his collection. Various editions of the Vedas and the Hindu Shastras, the Bible, the Koran and works on Buddhism are available.

The collection is rich in travel accounts. It contains the publications of the Hakluyt society in 180 volumes and Purchas' 'Pilgrims' belonging to a limited edition of 100 sets. Accounts of Hiuen Tsang and Fa-Hien were acquired by Asutosh for his library. Buchanann's 'A Journey from Madras' etc. and Rennell's 'Memoirs of a Map of Hindustan' (1792 edn.) and 'Memoirs of a Map of the Peninsula of India' (1793) are included.

Asutosh's collections of books on Mathematics include a set of thirteen volumes of the 'Collected Mathematical papers of Arthur Cayley', the 'Collected Mathematical papers of J.J. Sylvester the 'Scientific

paper of J.C. Adams' and Laplace's 'Mecanique Celeste' in four volumes with beautiful green 'morocco' binding. The first English translation of Euclid's Geometry published in 1570 has been already noticed above.

Books on Architecture, Sculptural, Painting and Music etc., number about one thousand. Special mention may be made of albums of photographs of Rajgir, Badami and Konarak, 'The Paintings in the Buddhist Cave Temples of Ajanta' by John Griffiths published in 1896-97, the volumes on 'Indian Jewellery', 'Indian Silk' and a copy of the limited edition of C.R. Day's 'The Music and Musical Instrument of Southern India and the Deccan' (1891).

Mention has to be made of the works of European artists visiting India in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that can be seen in the collections. The hand coloured copy of the 'Views in India' by William Hodges, Thomas Daniell's big volumes of 'Oriental Scenery', Solvyns' 'Les Hindous' illustrating the occupations, festivals and costumes of the Hindus and Mr. Belnos' 'The Sandhya or the Daily Prayers of the Brahmins' have enriched the collections. Asutosh's love for art led him to purchase also albums of the paintings of almost all the well-known painters of the European schools.

As one may expect, the section on law is especially rich. Almost all well-known Indian law serials are available. The English law serials include law reports of the Admiralty, Chancery, Exchequer, King's Bench and Queen's Bench etc., relating to eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Reports relating to bankruptcy, common pleas and the appeal cases of the House of Lords

deserve special mention. His library also contains law reports of the U.S.A., Canada and Ceylon.

As the number of books in his library increased, Asutosh had to add room after room to his house to accommodate them. Even then the books were all over that big house, in every room, floor to ceiling, in the passages and even under the staircases. A large number of books were accommodated in his house at Madhupur in the Santhal Parganas. A regular staff was maintained for dusting the books and there was a small bindery to bind the books as directed by him.

Asutosh took no steps to have a catalogue prepared of the books. The books were for his own use and he knew exactly where each was. He could find out without difficulty a book that he wanted to refer to.

Most of the books bear Asutosh's signature and the dates and price of purchase and many bear his notes on the margin. Rare books are marked by him 'rare', 'very rare' and 'unique'.

It must be understood that Asutosh was no mere collector of books. He was a versatile scholar. Books were his constant companions. He needed them to quench his thirst for more and more knowledge. That his interests were varied is proved by the fact that he collected books on almost every subject. It is only fit and proper that the chief votary in the temple of learning should have these equipments with him for his worship.

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